Village Sermons;

OR,

TWELVE PLAIN AND SHORT

DISCOURSES

ON THE

Principal Doctrines of the Gospel;

INTENDED FOR THE USE OF

FAMILIES, SUNDAY-SCHOOLS,

OR

COMPANIES

ASSEMBLED FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

IN

COUNTRY VILLAGES.

VOL. III.

THIRD EDITION.

BY GEORGE BURDER.

The Inhabitants of the Villages shall rehearse the righteous Acts of the Lord. Judges v. 7. 11.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

It was far from the author's intention to publiſh ſo many of theſe very plain diſcourſes; but he can truly ſay, they have been called for by the importunity of his friends and the public. He has therefore purſued this work with delight, judging "that nothing which looks like a call of Providence, directing to any opportunity of doing good to the ſouls of men, ſhould be neglected."

Theſe ſermons having proved as acceptable as the former, he has been induced to attempt another volume, containing ſixteen more; making, in the whole, fifty-two—a ſermon for every Sunday in the year.

Further to promote the particular deſign of theſe ſermons, in the diffuſion of evangelical knowledge among the poor, a number of ſmall pieces, conſiſting of a few pages each, and called for diſtinction ſake VILLAGE TRACTS, *are now publiſhing, under the inſpection of the author and other miniſters, by Mr.* CHAPMAN; *and may be had of him on very low terms, for the purpoſe of extenſive diſtribution among the poor and ignorant. The particulars may be ſeen on the covers of the Evangelical Magazine for December* 1798, *and at the end of this Volume.*

(Addreſſed particularly to Youth.)

A

SERMON,

ON

PROVERBS iii. 17.

Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.

IT is a maxim admitted by all the world, that "Every one is drawn by pleaſure." But it is the miſery of our fallen nature, that we are not drawn ſo much by the *beſt* pleaſures, as by the *worſt*; that the pleaſures we generally prefer, end in pain; and that the pleaſures we commonly neglect, are ſuch as would make us happy for ever. Theſe are the pleaſures of religion, called in our text, *the ways of wiſdom*; by which we may underſtand the ways preſcribed to us by Chriſt, who is WISDOM itſelf, and the purſuit of which is the true wiſdom of man; for "the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom; and to depart from evil, that is underſtanding."

All men ſeek happineſs; but few know where to find it. They may be compared to a number of ſeamen, ſailing from different ports, in queſt of a very rich and beautiful country, which they have heard much of, but never ſaw; and the greater part of whom ſet out without a map or a compaſs: Is it any wonder if few of them ever reach the deſired ſpot? Juſt ſo it is with young perſons, who are eagerly deſirous of pleaſure; they are willing to take any pains, or run any riſk for it; but they never ſeriouſly enquire what is true happineſs; and how may we certainly acquire it? Now, if we will take Jeſus Chriſt for our counſellor, and "none teacheth

like him," he will aſſure us that "his ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all his paths are peace." Satan indeed ſays, that the ways of *ſin* are pleaſantneſs; ſo he told Eve. She believed him; and you know the conſequence. Satan alſo ſays, that the ways of religion are painful and irkſome. But whom will you believe! the God of truth, or "the father of lies;" he that "cannot lie," or "he that deceiveth the whole world?" God's teſtimony is true; and it is confirmed by ten thouſand witneſſes. All the good men that ever lived will bear witneſs to the pleaſures of religion; yea, the death beds of wicked men are conſtrained to confeſs the ſame.

Let us now conſider, What the pleaſures of religion are, and we may rank them under the following heads:

1. *The poſſeſſion of Chriſtian graces.* 2. *The enjoyment of Chriſtian privileges, and,* 3. *The performance of Chriſtian duties.*

1. The poſſeſſion of *Chriſtian graces* is a ſource of pleaſure.

The great thing which diſtinguiſhes a real Chriſtian from another man is, his having the Spirit. *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*; and whoever has the Spirit, has the ſeal of God, and the earneſt of heaven. *The water that I ſhall give him,* ſaid Chriſt, when ſpeaking of the Spirit, *ſhall be in him, a well of water ſpringing up unto everlaſting life.* Now, the Spirit of God is the author of a new and divine life in the ſoul of a believer. He is born of God. He is a new creature. Every grace is implanted in the ſoul; the exerciſe of which is natural, and pleaſant to the new nature, as the due exerciſe of our ſenſes is to the natural man.

Knowledge; the knowledge of God in Chriſt, is pleaſant. It is to the ſoul, what the light of the ſun is to the body. *Truly the light is ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to behold the ſun.* St. Paul, who was bleſſed with this knowledge, "counted all things but loſs for the excellency of it;

it; and was ſo delighted with it, that "he determined to know nothing elſe."

Faith is a preſent grace. It gives ſubſiſtence to things unſeen. It realizes the world to come. It beholds Jeſus, though inviſible to the carnal eye. It ſees him on the croſs, and on the throne; and ſeeing him, it "rejoices with joy unſpeakable and full of glory." This is the grace that receives the promiſes; the exceeding great and precious promiſes," and derives infinite ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction from them.

Repentance has its pleaſures too—our Lord himſelf being judge. *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* If there be any thing in religion that *ſeems* unpleaſant, it is this; and yet there is more ſatisfaction in the tears that are ſhed for our ſins, than there was pleaſure in the commiſſion of them. Beſides, "he that ſows in tears ſhall reap in joy; and it is far better to ſmart for ſin on earth, than to burn for it in hell.

Hope is certainly a pleaſant grace. Hope is the cordial of life. The believer's hope is well founded. It is *a good hope, through grace*; not the hope of the hypocrite, which is a flaſh of light, followed by the blackneſs of eternal darkneſs. It is "a lively hope," that ſhall never make aſhamed, for it is founded on Jeſus, the rock of ages.

Love is undoubtedly pleaſant—the Love of God. God, reconciled in Chriſt, is the proper object of the creature's love. All the miſery that mortals ever knew, is in conſequence of forſaking God, and transferring their love to ſin; nor can true happineſs ever be known, till the ſoul returns to God. The love of our neighbour too, affords unſpeakable pleaſure. There is no luxury upon earth equal to that of doing good. It reſembles the happineſs of God himſelf.

2. The enjoyment of *Chriſtian privileges* is another ſpring of religious pleaſure.

It is the Chriſtian's privilege to have *peace with God*, through faith in the blood of Chriſt. Who-

ever, under a ſenſe of his ſin and miſery, flies to the refuge of the Saviour's arms, is gladly received, and freely pardoned. In the fountain of his blood, he is waſhed from all ſin. In the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, he is juſtified from all accuſations. He is no longer in a ſtate of condemnation; he has *paſſed from death unto life.* And what condition can equal this? If a number of priſoners were in jail under ſentence of death, and one was brought out by the king's pardon; who would be thought happy? the pardoned man, though clothed with rags, or the criminals within, though clothed with purple, and faring ſumptuouſly every day? The pardoned man, however poor, would be reckoned far happier than the condemned malefactors, however rich. And ſo in this caſe—*Bleſſed is he whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered.* A ſenſe of this in the conſcience, is the greateſt happineſs upon earth; it is *the peace that paſſeth all underſtanding.* And it is ſad to think that the greater part of mankind live without this; and are deluding themſelves with a *falſe* peace—for *there is no peace to the wicked,* or none but the devil's peace. O, how can wicked men enjoy themſelves at all? If their eyes were open, they would be like *Belſhazzar* at his impious feaſt; the hand writing upon the wall ſpoilt all his mirth: So would it be with the ungodly man at the play-houſe, the card table, the alehouſe, or the dancing room; he would ſee SIN, WRATH, DEATH, JUDGEMENT, and HELL, written, as it were, in flaming letters on the wall; he would tremble with fear, and take no reſt, till he obtain this bleſſed privilege, *peace with God,* by the blood of Chriſt.

This holy calm ſometimes ſwells into ſacred *Joy,* yea, *Joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; for the kingdom of God is not only "righteouſneſs and peace, but, *joy* in the Holy Ghoſt." What joy reſults to a believer from the conſideration of the hell he has eſcaped, the pardon he has obtained, the grace he has received, and the glory which awaits him! Every thing that can contribute to human joy, and ten thou-

thouſand times more, unite to make him a happy man. The contemplation of Chriſt alone is enough. What wonders of grace and glory meet in him. All that is great, noble, amiable, heavenly, is ſeen in Jeſus. All power, wiſdom, patience, grace, mercy, love and faithfulneſs are combined in him. *He is the chief among ten thouſand, and altogether lovely.* And when the believer can add, *This is* MY *beloved, and this is* MY *friend!* his joy is full. And well may that object create bliſs in heart, which is the heaven of heaven above; for we have no higher idea of celeſtial felicity, than that it conſiſts in *being with Chriſt, and beholding his glory.*

What a privilege is *Adoption* into the family of God! *To as many as have received Chriſt, he hath given power to become the Sons of God.* And O, "what manner of love is this." Pardoned rebels taken into the houſe of God, into the arms of God, yea, into the heart of God! *I will be a* FATHER *unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty.* And this is not a formal title, or an empty name like many of thoſe nominal honours which diſtinguiſh the ſons of men; No. It is connected with freedom of acceſs into a father's preſence; holy boldneſs and familiarity as with a parent; a conſtant ſhare of his tender love, gracious communications, and providential bounty. He, who created and governs the world, bids us "caſt all our care upon him," unboſom all our ſorrows, and commit all our concerns for time and eternity to his management, for *he careth for us.* He promiſes never to forget us; to withhold no good thing from us; and to make all things work together for our good.

Theſe are ſome of the believer's privileges in *life.* But religion never ſhews its real value more than in *a dying hour.* And then, nothing elſe avails. Wicked men, who have deſpiſed it all their lives, are forced, at laſt, to have recourſe to its *forms*; and in general, they who have lived without its power, are contented and *cheated* with its form when they die.

die. They bear, however, a ſtrong teſtimony to the excellency of religion; for, commonly, "Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die." Like wretched Balaam, they wiſhed "to die the death of the righteous;" but moſt men die, as they live. Yet, divine grace has wrought miracles of mercy at the eleventh hour.

But, O, the privilege of dying in the Lord. "Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord." Mark the end of the Chriſtian; it is peace. The God whom he has feared, and loved, and ſerved, will not forſake him now. The Saviour who died for him will ſupport him in dying. Death has loſt its ſting; and bleſſed is the death of him that has an intereſt in the death of Chriſt.

Our limits oblige us very briefly to run over the Chriſtian privileges: let us open another ſource of his pleaſures, namely,

3. The performance of *Chriſtian duties*. Of theſe, *Prayer* is the firſt and chief. *Behold, he prayeth!* was the firſt mark of Paul's converſion. And this is ſo pleaſant to the Chriſtian, that he cannot live without it. As well might a man live without breathing as a Chriſtian without praying. He eſteems it a bleſſed privilege to "call upon the Lord in the day of trouble," and to be graciouſly heard and delivered. He loves the Lord who heard the voice of his ſupplication, and determines to call upon him as long as he lives. The duty of *Praiſe* is alſo very pleaſant. It is not only a comely but a *pleaſant* thing to be thankful. "Is any man merry," ſaith St. James, "let him ſing Pſalms." Singing the praiſe of God with the heart, is a delightful ſervice, akin to the joys of heaven. *Reading* and *Hearing the word of God* is alſo exceedingly pleaſant. As new born babes deſire the breaſt, ſo new born ſouls deſire the ſincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. *The law of thy mouth,* ſaid David, *is better to me than thouſands of gold and ſilver. How ſweet are thy words to my taſte, yea ſweeter than honey to my palate! They are more to me than*

than my neceſſary food. Yes; whoever is born of God, loves the word; and whoever diſlikes it, cavils at it, neglects it, has a ſure evidence of being in a carnal ſtate. *The Lord's day*, and the public ordinances of God's houſe, are very pleaſant to a believer. From his very ſoul, he calls the ſabbath *a delight, holy of the Lord, and honourable*; he eſteems *a day in his courts better than a thouſand*; he is *glad when it is ſaid, Let us go up to the houſe of the Lord, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.* O, if poor carnal ſinners knew the pleaſures of the godly in the worſhip of their Lord, they would be aſhamed of their poor, mean, idle, worldly amuſements, and gladly forſake them for the more ſolid, refined, and heavenly joys of the children of God. Theſe are but a ſmall part of the Chriſtian's pleaſures. We might add, his ſacred joy at the table of the Lord; his ſweet meditations on divine ſubjects; his profitable converſation with fellow Chriſtians, the ſupports he finds under afflictions; and the proſpects he enjoys of eternal felicity.

And as all theſe are good and pleaſant *in themſelves*, ſo they appear to greater advantage, if you *compare* them with the pleaſures of the world. They are certainly far more *ſolid* and *ſatisfying*; far more *rational* and *noble*; and above all, far more *durable.* "The moſt innocent of our carnal pleaſures, ſuch as eating, drinking, ſleeping, and the like, are the badges of our weakneſs, and a ſort of reproach upon our nature; and it is our inclination to them, rather than any excellence in them, that makes them alluring." They are needful, it is true, at preſent; but when our nature ſhall be gloriſied, we ſhall be "as the angels," and require none of theſe things. And when a man places his happineſs in ſenſual pleaſures, and carries them to exceſs in gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, and ſo on, he becomes a brute rather than a man, and the Scripture pronounces him, *dead, while he liveth.* "The good man is ſatisfied from himſelf;" he has

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an inward ſource of joy; but the carnal man who roves abroad for happineſs, is never ſatisfied. *The eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing.* The beſt of his pleaſures periſh in the uſing. Solomon ſays, *As the crackling of thorns under a pot, ſo is the laughter of the fool*—a noiſy blaze, and ſoon over. Let a wiſe man liſten to the impertinent, vain, fooliſh, proud, profane converſation of a ſet of gay and looſe people in a tavern; what a maſs of nonſenſe and wickedneſs does it appear? and could it be written down and ſhewn to the company themſelves, ſurely, they would be aſhamed of it! How childiſh are the amuſements of the card table! How ſtrange that a number of rational and immortal beings ſhould ſpend hours upon hours in playing with bits of painted paper! How ridiculous for a company of grown people to be jumping and running about a room in their dancing aſſemblies! How fooliſh for thouſands of men and women to trail many miles to a race-ground, juſt to ſee one horſe's head before another! Not to mention other pleaſures of the world, which are as *criminal* as they are *mean*, which will by no means bear reflection, but fill the mind with painful remorſe. Ah! what real pleaſure can that man enjoy, who is forced to look back on the paſt with regret, on the preſent with confuſion, and on the future with dread and diſmay. The carnal pleaſure taker is an hypocrite in his mirth. *Even in laughter the heart is ſorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heavineſs.* It is recorded in the life of Colonel Gardiner, that before his converſion, when he gave a looſe to all his carnal paſſions, and lived in many guilty pleaſures, when he was thought by his companions ſo happy, that they called him the *happy rake*; he was even then ſo miſerable, at times, through the ſtings of his conſcience, that he has envied a dog that came into the room, wiſhing rather to have been that dog, than a man, who "muſt give an account of himſelf to God." This is juſt what wiſe and holy Job long ago obſerved—*Though wickedneſs be ſweet in his mouth;*

mouth; though he hide it under his tongue; though he ſpare it, and forſake it not, but keep it ſtill within his mouth; yet his meat in his bowels is turned; it is the gall of aſps within him. How juſt is the compariſon! Sin is the *food* of a carnal man; it is his meat and drink to do the will of his father which is in hell. This food is very ſweet to him, ſweeter than honey and the honey-comb; ſo ſweet that he is unwilling to loſe the reliſh of it, but tries to enjoy it as long as poſſible. But what is the conſequence? Is this ſweet food wholeſome? No. It is turned in his bowels to *poiſon*. It is *the gall of aſps* within him. The bite of an aſp was deadly. There was no remedy for it; it killed in four hours, and yet it killed with little pain. Thus Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, deſtroyed herſelf. Juſt ſo the ſinner dies; he may be ſtupified and feel no terrors in his ſoul; but the bitterneſs that flows from ſin is the bitterneſs of everlaſting death.

APPLICATION.

We have now taken a view of the pleaſures of religion; in the poſſeſſion of Chriſtian graces, the enjoyment of Chriſtian privileges, and the performance of Chriſtian duties. And now, dear young people, are you not almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians? May God perſuade you altogether! If you doubt the truth of what we have aſſerted, we appeal to Chriſt himſelf. Hear him. *Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls: for my yoke is eaſy, and my burden is light.* Do you love pleaſure? I know you do. Seek it then in Chriſt's way, and not in the ways of ſin. There is nothing in religion that is really irkſome and unpleaſant. Even that which ſeems to be ſo, as repentance, ſelf-denial, and the mortification of ſin, is rendered eaſy by the grace of God. And were it not ſo, what are the pains of a moment to the pains of eternity.

"Who

"Who would not give a trifle to prevent
What he would give a thousand worlds to cure?"

But the fact is, there is far more pleasure in religion now, than there is in sin; and, we are sure that it will *end* better. What will it avail any of you an hundred years hence, that you were gay and merry, that you saw every fine sight, and indulged every sensual pleasure? but it will avail you, a thousand years hence, that you regard the one thing needful, and choose the good part." And let it be observed, that the person who can take no pleasure in religion, is not at all qualified for the joys of heaven, nor could he be happy there if he were admitted. If you can take no pleasure in the things of God, in singing his praises, in conversing with his people, in observing the Sabbath, what would you do in heaven, where the delights are not carnal, such as you love, but wholly spiritual, such as you hate? Does not this convince you that something is wrong? that your state and disposition is not what it should be? *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* It is regeneration that makes the important change in a person's views and taste, for *that which is born of the flesh is flesh*, and therefore can relish only carnal things; but *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*, and therefore enjoys spiritual pleasures. O look up to God in earnest prayer, that you may experience this blessed change. Then will sin be the object of your hatred, and holiness that of your delight. Depend upon it you will be no loser by religion. *Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promises of this life and of that to come. What can* you wish more? While your eternal happiness is secured, you will enjoy "a conscience void of offence towards God and man." Your way may be directed, your crosses sanctified, and your earthly comforts doubled. *O taste and see that the Lord is good.*

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A SERMON ON MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

IN all the Bible I know not a more weighty ſentence than this. Were it duly conſidered, what a religious world would this become! The diſregard of it makes the world that ſcene of miſchief and folly which you behold. To give theſe words their full force, remember whoſe they are. They are the words of Jeſus Chriſt, the incarnate God, the Creator of the world. And who ſo able to determine that the ſoul is worth more than the world, as he who made them both? He made the ſoul, and he made the world; yea, the price he paid for the redemption of the ſoul was his own precious blood. Surely then he knew the value of the ſoul. Regard theſe words, my friends, as full of truth, and truth of the greateſt importance to yourſelves. And, O that he who firſt ſpoke them to his diſciples, may now ſpeak them to our hearts by his Holy Spirit!

In the text there are three things which require our attention:

I. Every man has a ſoul of the greateſt value.

II. There is a poſſibility of a man's loſing his ſoul, yea great danger of it.

III. The whole world can make no amends for the loſs of a ſoul.

I. Every man has a ſoul of the greateſt value.

The nature of the human ſoul is, at preſent, but imperfectly known. God has not told us ſo much

about it as to gratify our curiosity; but enough to assist our faith. From the Scriptures alone we learn any thing satisfactory concerning our souls; and there we find that the soul is a something distinct from the body; a thinking immortal substance; and capable of living separately from the body in another world. This appears from Matt. x. 28, where our Lord says to his disciples---*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* In like manner, we learn from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, that the soul of the former was tormented in hell, while his body lay buried in earth. Jesus Christ assured the penitent thief on the cross, that he should be with him that very day in Paradise, while, as we know, the body of Jesus was laid in the tomb. It is said of Judas, that *he went to his own place*, which certainly was hell; but his wretched carcase was on earth. St. Paul declared, that death would be *gain* to him, because, when *absent from the body*, he should be *present with the Lord*; useful as he was in the church, and happy in that usefulness, he rather desired to die, to depart, *to be with Christ*, which was far better.

Now this immortal soul is of immense value; and its excellency may be argued from the following considerations:

1. Its *origin*; it came immediately from God. Something peculiar is said of the formation of man, Gen. i. 26. *God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* Surely it was the soul of man, rather than his earthly body, that bore the divine resemblance.

2. Consider again the vast and noble *powers* of the soul. When these powers are assisted by learning, how does the philosopher survey, measure, and describe the heavenly bodies, or search into the hidden secrets of nature. And in an ordinary way, how skilfully does the mechanic form various instruments and engines for the common purposes of life. The farmer

farmer cultivates and improves the earth, and produces from it the foodful grain. Artificers, of various names, furnish us with useful and ornamental articles of clothes and furniture; while the scholar, like the industrious bee, collects the wisdom of all countries and ages. And, what is far better, the soul is capable, by divine grace, of knowing God, of being renewed in his holy image, of paying him cheerful service, and of enjoying him for ever in a better world.

3. Once more, consider the worth of the soul in the amazing *price* paid down for its *redemption*. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ*, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, would not have sufficed: nothing but the blood of the Lamb of God could atone for sin.

"The ransom was paid down; the fund of heav'n,
Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,
Amazing, and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
All price beyond!"

Surely the ransom-price of the soul bespeaks its infinite value. O let us learn to value our souls!

4. Consider again the *contention of heaven and hell* for the soul of man. Heaven from above invites us to come to God. Jesus Christ came down on purpose to shew us the way; yea, to be himself the way. The ministers of the Gospel "watch for souls;" for this they study and pray, and travel and labour, that they may snatch perishing souls from the devouring flames. They are "instant in season and out of season," and are "all things to all men," that they may win some. Your serious relations, friends, and neighbours, long for your conversion; for this purpose they pray for you, speak to you, and lend you books. Yea, the angels of God are waiting around us, longing to be the messengers of good news to heaven, that sinners are repenting on earth.

On the other hand, it is the business of the devil to tempt and destroy the souls of men. As a subtle

ſerpent he lies in wait to deceive, or as a roaring lion he roams about to deſtroy. Gladly would he ſeduce you into ſin by the love of pleaſure, or get you to neglect ſalvation by the love of buſineſs, or prejudice your minds againſt the Goſpel of life. What is the reaſon that preaching the Goſpel is ſo much oppoſed; and ſtorms of perſecution raiſed againſt it? Satan is afraid of loſing his prey. He knows that "the Goſpel is the power of God unto ſalvation;" he would, therefore, keep men from hearing it, leſt any ſhould be "turned from darkneſs to light, and from the power of the devil to God." Learn then the worth of your ſouls from the ſtrife there is between heaven and hell to obtain them; and ſay, whether you would wiſh to gladden angels or gratify devils.

5. Above all, conſider the immenſe value of the ſoul, in that vaſt *eternity* of bliſs or woe that awaits it. We are but in an embrio ſtate at preſent, like a bird in the egg, or an infant in the womb. We ſhall ſoon die into eternity. We ſhall ſoon begin a ſtate of being that will never end. The preſent life is merely the ſeed-time of eternity, and *what a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap; he that ſoweth iniquity, ſhall reap vanity*---he ſhall meet with nothing but diſappointment. *He that ſoweth to the fleſh ſhall reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit ſhall reap life everlaſting*, Gal. vi. 20. Conſidering the endleſs duration of a ſoul, the happineſs or miſery of one ſaved or damned ſinner will be far greater than the temporal happineſs or miſery of all the inhabitants of England for a hundred years. Eternity ſtamps infinite value on the ſoul; and this is the reaſon of the compariſon made in our text between one ſingle ſoul and the whole world, and of the queſtion propoſed in it, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* The expreſſion ſeems to allude to the cuſtoms of thoſe countries which do not uſe money in their traffic, but exchange one article for another; now what can be exchanged for the ſoul? Can any thing be offered of equal value? Certainly not, for

every

every thing in this world is temporal, but the ſoul of man is eternal. How dreadful then its loſs! And this leads us to ſhew,

II. That a man may loſe his ſoul, and that he is in danger of ſo doing.

The ſoul of man cannot be loſt by *ceaſing to be*; for being immortal in its nature, that is impoſſible. And O how gladly would a damned ſoul ceaſe to be, if it were poſſible! But for a ſoul to be loſt, is for it to be loſt as to that happineſs, here and hereafter, which is ſuited to its nature. It is to loſe all the preſent pleaſures of religion, "the conſolation that is in Chriſt," "the comfort of love," "the peace that paſſeth all underſtanding," and "the joy of the Holy Ghoſt, which is unſpeakable and full of glory." Whatever Satan and wicked men affirm, we know aſſuredly that the truly religious man is the only happy man; and, therefore, he who lives without religion, lives without the true happineſs of life; and though he may pretend to defy the danger that awaits him, yet conſcience will ſometimes ſpeak, and in the midſt of his ſinful mirth will whiſper in his ear, "What will all this profit, if thy ſoul be loſt at laſt?"

But O, who can tell the fearful import of that word *loſt*, as it reſpects the future and eternal world! I remember a few years ago that a boy, who was ſent upon ſome errand on a cold winter's evening, was overtaken with a dreadful ſtorm; when, the ſnow fell ſo thick, and drifted in ſuch a manner, that he miſſed his way; and continuing ſeveral hours in that condition, was ready to periſh. About midnight, a gentleman in the neighbourhood thought he heard a ſound, but could not diſtinguiſh what it was, till, opening his window, he heard a human voice, at a great diſtance, pronouncing in a piteous tone---*Loſt! loſt! loſt!* The poor boy, in ſome hope of help, kept crying out at intervals, *loſt! loſt! loſt!* Humanity led the gentleman to ſend perſons diligently to ſeek for the lad, who was at length found and preſerved. Happy for him that he per-

ceived his danger, that he cried for help, and that his cry was heard! So will it be happy for us if, ſenſible of the value of our ſouls, and their danger of periſhing in hell, we now cry for mercy and help to that dear and gracious "friend of ſinners," that great and generous deliverer, who "came to ſeek and to ſave that which was *loſt*." But if this be neglected, the ſoul will be loſt indeed, loſt without remedy, loſt for ever. He who is now a *Saviour*, but will ſhortly be a *Judge*, has marked out the characters of the wicked, and has ſaid---*Theſe ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment*. Aweful words! *Everlaſting puniſhment!* He will ſay to them, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. In the fearful expectation of this, a gentleman, ſome years ſince, who had been a member of parliament, and was eſteemed an orator, but who had neglected his ſoul and religion, kept crying out on his dying bed, "Loſt, loſt, my ſoul is loſt for ever!"

Now, would we eſcape this dreadful end? Let us then, ſeriouſly conſider *the danger* of loſing our ſouls. That there *is* danger of doing ſo, the word of God abundantly declares. Remember what Chriſt himſelf ſaid, *Enter ye in at the ſtrait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be who go in thereat*. Is there not danger then? Mark again what is ſaid by the Pſalmiſt. *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God*. The word of God deſcribes the very people. See a liſt of them in 1 Cor. vi. 9. and mark, whether any of you are there deſcribed. *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators---nor adulterers---nor effeminate*, that is, perſons of laſcivious tempers and *practices*, however *private* and *alone---nor ſodomites---nor thieves- -nor covetous---nor drunkards---nor revilers---nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God*. Look over this black catalogue again, and if you find your name there, own it. Bluſh, and tremble to think what

what it muſt be to be ſhut out from the kingdom of God, and ſo loſe your own ſoul; and then ſay, is it worth while to loſe your ſoul for any of theſe ſinful pleaſures and practices? Will you, with your eyes open, exchange your ſoul for any of hese things?

I find again, that all *impenitent* perſons---all *unconverted* perſons---all *unregenerate* perſons, and all *neglecters of the Goſpel*, will loſe their own ſouls; and, that you may be ſure of this, I will mention the chapter and verſe where it is ſo declared. All *impenitent* people, Luke xiii. 3, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*---All *nnconverted* people, Matt. xviii. 3, *Verily, I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*---All *unregenerate* people, John iii. 3, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* To theſe characters we add---all *neglecters of the Goſpel*, Heb ii. 3, *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?* How can we in our conſciences expect to avoid condemnation for our ſins, if, through careleſſneſs and unbelief, we deſpiſe and reject, or diſregard, and do not embrace, the Goſpel which brings ſalvation to loſt ſinners? And again, 2 Cor. iv. 3, *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt.* The Goſpel is a glorious light, and leads ſinners to ſalvation: but if it be *hid*, if it be covered and concealed from the minds of them that hear it, ſo that they cannot underſtand or receive it; becauſe of the veil of ignorance and blindneſs that remains on their hearts, it is a proof of their being yet in the loſt and ruined ſtate into which they were plunged by the fall, and, if they die in that ſtate, they will be loſt for ever. The apoſtle adds---*The god of this world*, that is, the devil, whom the heathens worſhip, and carnal men obey, he *hath blinded the eyes of unbelievers, leſt the light of the glorious Goſpel ſhould enlighten them.* If people who have the Goſpel are loſt, it is not the fault of the Goſpel, but it is owing to men's wilful blindneſs, and the advantage the devil takes of of it to keep them in the way to hell. *Mr. Flavell* illuſtrates

illuſtrates this by the following compariſon: "Let us ſuppoſe a number of blind men on an iſland, where there are many ſmooth paths, all leading to the top of a ſteep cliff, and theſe blind men going on continually, in one or other of theſe paths which lead to the brink of ruin, which they ſee not, it muſt needs follow, if they all move forward, the whole number will in a ſhort time periſh, the iſland be cleared, and its inhabitants loſt in the bottom of the ſea. This is the caſe of carnal men; they are now on this habitable globe, ſurrounded with the vaſt ocean of eternity; there are many paths leading to eternal miſery, and every man turns to his own way; one to the way of drunkenneſs, another to the way of ſwearing, another to the way of lewdneſs, another to pride, another to covetouſneſs, and ſo on. Forward they go, not once making a ſtand, or thinking to what end it will bring them; till, at death, *over they go*, and we hear no more of them in this world. Thus one generation of ſinners follows another, and they who come after, applaud the miſerable wretches that went before them. So hell fills, and the world empties its inhabitants daily into it."

Thus it is plain that the ſoul may be loſt, and that there is great danger of it. Why elſe did the Son of God come down from heaven? Why has he ſent his Goſpel to us? Why elſe do the miniſters of Chriſt cry aloud and ſpare not? Why elſe do they warn every man, and teach every man, but that they may convince ſinners of their danger, and prevent them from loſing their own ſouls? We now proceed to ſhew, that,

III. The whole world can make no amends for the loſs of a ſoul.

What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? It is not here ſuppoſed, that it is in the power of any man to conquer or poſſeſs the whole world. No man ever yet *ſaw* all the world, and life would be too ſhort for that purpoſe. But it is to gain all the riches, honours, delights, and pleaſures that a man can poſſibly enjoy.

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It is to have every deſire accompliſhed, every ſenſe gratified. It is to have the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life indulged in the higheſt perfection. All that can pleaſe the palate; the luxuries of all countries collected on the table of the epicure; all the delightful charms of muſic; all the elegancies and conveniencies of a noble palace; all that can gratify the ſmell and the touch; all the pleaſures of imagination, ariſing from grandeur, beauty, and novelty.—And, ſuppoſing all this obtained—Solomon obtained it all. And what a *poor all* it proved—"*Vanity and vexation* of ſpirit" was the total amount.

And is this the whole of that for which men riſk their ſouls? Fooliſh barter! Wretched exchange! Was *Eſau* wiſe, who ſold his birth-right for a meſs of pottage? Was *Judas* wiſe, who ſold his maſter, and his own ſoul too, for thirty pieces of ſilver? Juſt as wiſe is the worldly man, who parts with heaven for the ſordid and ſhort-lived pleaſures of earth. I remember reading of a woman, whoſe houſe was on fire. She was very active in removing her goods, but forgot her child, who was ſleeping in the cradle. At length, ſhe remembered the babe, and ran with earneſt deſire to ſave it. But it was now too late. The flames forbade her entrance. Judge of her agony of mind, when ſhe exclaimed, "O my child, my child! I have ſaved my goods, but loſt my child!" Juſt ſo will it be with many a poor ſinner, who was all his life "careful and troubled about many things," while "the one thing needful" was forgot. What will it then avail for a man to ſay—"I got a good place, or a good trade, but loſt my ſoul! I got a large fortune, but loſt my ſoul. I got many friends, but God is my enemy. I lived in pleaſure, but now pain is my everlaſting portion. I clothed my body gaily, but my ſoul is naked before God. Our Lord expoſed this folly, in the parable of the worldly rich man, Luke xii. 16, &c. His wealth increaſed abundantly. He was about to enlarge his barns. And then he promiſed himſelf a long life of idleneſs,

luxury,

luxury, and mirth. *But God ſaid to him, Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided?* Here, for the ſake of the body, the ſoul was forgot. While he was dreaming of years to come, death was at the door; and little did he think "that the next hour his friends would be ſcrambling for his eſtate, the worms for his body, and devils for his ſoul."

APPLICATION.

1. Is the ſoul ſo valuable? Then do we act as if we believed it ſo to be? Are our chief deſires and endeavours for the body, or for the ſoul? It is true, that the buſineſſes of life, and the ſupport of the body, require our daily care and labour. But God has placed no man in ſuch a ſtate as to allow no time for the care of the ſoul. One whole day in ſeven is, by his authority, appointed for the care of the ſoul and the worſhip of God. Every man, however buſy, finds ſome time for meals and reſt and converſation on other days; and if the heart were ſet on God and heaven, as it ought to be, many a moment would be found for ſpiritual exerciſes, without hindrance to worldly buſineſs. Yea, a proper regard to true religion, and the bleſſing of God procured by prayer, would render worldly buſineſs more eaſy, and more proſperous too. But, were it otherwiſe, remember the text, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* Is it reaſonable, think you, that the nobler part, the immortal ſoul, ſhould have no ſhare in your thoughts and cares and endeavours? Shall the brutal part of man engroſs all his affections? If it does, the event will be fatal. *If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.*

2. Is there danger of loſing the ſoul? then beware; be on your guard; watch and pray, leſt you ſhould loſe your ſouls. Remember that ſin and ignorance, and careleſſneſs, and unbelief, will certainly ruin the ſoul. Though the fleſh may plead for theſe things, and you may have the majority of the world

world on your ſide, yet God has ſaid, *The end of theſe things is death.*

But why ſhould you loſe your ſouls? Is there not a Saviour, and a great one? He came from heaven on purpoſe to ſave that which was loſt. Do you aſk, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* We reply, with the apoſtle Paul, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* There is no name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved, but that of Jeſus. He is the only deliverer from the wrath to come. Take care that you truſt in nothing elſe. Make not your good works, as they are called, your dependence. Virtue and morality are excellent things, and promote the peace and welfare of ſociety, but they are not ſaviours. He that truſts them leans on a broken reed, builds on the yielding ſand, and will be woefully diſappointed at laſt. By *grace* alone are ſinners ſaved, through *faith*; and faith is the gift of God. Many who have ſome concern for their ſouls, periſh through their ignorance of Chriſt. They think themſelves moral and devout, and doubt not that God will accept them. But this is a ruinous miſtake. Such moral perſons are in as much danger as the moſt profane. This is the fatal ſtumbling block of thouſands. But know this, Chriſt alone can ſave your ſouls. He muſt be your wiſdom, your righteouſneſs, your ſanctification, and redemption; your all in all. Fly then to him without delay. If you would not loſe your ſoul, call upon him to ſave it. This is his office: He is the SAVIOUR. It is his delight: He waits to be gracious. His open arms are ready to receive the trembling ſinner. Turn ye to the ſtrong hold, ye priſoners of hope. Believe in him, and you are ſafe. You may then ſay, with St. Paul, *I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him*, namely, the immortal ſoul, with all its eternal concerns, *againſt that day*, the day of final judgement. Yea, you may ſay,

"Firm as the earth thy Goſpel ſtands,
My Lord, my hope, my truſt:

If

If I am found in Jeſu's hands,
My ſoul can ne'er be loſt."

Finally. Can the whole world make no amends for the loſs of a ſoul? then prize the world leſs, and the ſoul more. Learn to think of the world now as you will think of it on a dying bed. "A dying man would give all the world for his ſoul; when in health he does not ſo much as think of it. Whilſt he is able, he will do nothing at all; and he would fain do all, when he is no longer able to do any thing. What ſtrange deluſion is this! will mankind never recover from it, after ſo many fatal examples?" Be moderate in your purſuit of the world. *Be diligent in buſineſs*, but take care to be *fervent in ſpirit* alſo. Time is ſhort: eternity is long. Live for eternity. Shew your regard for your ſouls, by earneſtneſs and diligence in all the means of grace. If you prize your ſouls, you will prize Sabbaths, and Bibles, and Sermons, and Prayers, and ſerious friends. *Redeem* then *the time. Hear the voice of God while it is called To-day; for this is the acceptable time; this is the day of ſalvation. Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure.* Were religion painful and miſerable; ſtill, as neceſſary to eternal happineſs, it would be your wiſdom to be religious; but to be religious is to be happy now and happy for ever. On the contrary, the wicked man is miſerable now, and will be miſerable for ever. So that the choice which is propoſed to every man on this ſubject is this: "Will you have a foretaſte of heaven now, and then heaven for ever: or will you have a foretaſte of hell now, and then hell for ever? *Will you have two hells, or two heavens?*"

5 DE60

A SERMON

ON

1 COR. xiv. 24, 25.

If all prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt: and ſo falling down on his face, he will worſhip God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

IN theſe words we have an account of the power of the Goſpel in the times of the apoſtles. We ſee here what was the deſign and effect of the word of God in primitive times. And it ſhould be our concern that the ſame Goſpel may be bleſſed in the ſame manner among ourſelves. In thoſe early days there were *miraculous gifts* in the church; for inſtance, ſpeaking in a language which they had never learned; and this was to enable the preachers to addreſs themſelves to people of all nations. It was then reckoned very honourable to poſſeſs the *gift of tongues*, and ſome coveted it too much. St. Paul, in this chapter, ſhews that it was far more deſirable to *prophecy*, or *preach*: "*Follow after love*, ſaith he, *and deſire ſpiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy; for he that propheſieth, (or preacheth,) ſpeaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.*" And, in our text, he mentions the bleſſed effects of preaching, in the converſion of a perſon to God. He ſuppoſes a caſe, which no doubt often happened: A heathen, or other ignorant perſon, led by curioſity, happens to come into an aſſembly of chriſtians, in a houſe, or barn perhaps, wiſhing to ſee or hear ſomething of this new religion; he liſtens to what one or another of the preachers drop,

and, the Spirit of God opening his eyes and touching his heart, he is convinced that he is a ſinner, he feels himſelf condemned, he is ſurprized to find the ſecret thoughts of his heart laid open; and ſo, ſtruck with an awe of the Divine Majeſty, he earneſtly implores the mercy of God, and is convinced that God is, in a ſpecial manner, preſent with his people.

True religion is always the ſame. The Goſpel is always "the power of God;" and when he is pleaſed to own and bleſs the preaching or reading of it, the ſame bleſſed effects are produced. Men are fully convinced of ſin, and converted to God. The Lord grant that ſuch may be the effect of his word among us at this time!

I. We may firſt obſerve, that *Preaching the Goſpel is an ordinance of God, and conſtantly uſed in the primitive church.* Our Saviour, when leaving this world, directed his diſciples to *go and teach all nations*;---to *go into all the world, and preach the Goſpel to every creature:* he graciouſly promiſed to be with the preachers of it, *even to the end of the world*; and added this ſolemn ſanction---*He that believeth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be ſaved: but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Thus it appears that believing in Chriſt is neceſſary to ſalvation; and preaching the Goſpel is generally neceſſary to believing, for *how ſhall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how ſhall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how ſhall they hear without a preacher?* Deſpiſed as preaching the Goſpel was at firſt, and ſtill is by many, *it hath pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave them that believe,* Mark xvi. 16. Rom. x. 14. 1 Cor. i. 21. A portion of this bleſſing may be expected by all thoſe who meet together, at any time or place, for reading or hearing the Scriptures, or the explanation of them, with a view to their own edification, or that of their neighbours. May we enjoy it now!

II. *Curioſity frequently led perſons to the Chriſtian aſſemblies.* The religion of Chriſt made a great ſtir

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in the world. The true knowledge of God was ſo loſt in general, that where-ever the Goſpel was firſt preached, it excited great attention; it ſeemed a new religion; it brought ſtrange things to men's ears. Some were greatly prejudiced againſt it. Many falſe and malicious reports were ſpread, and when it was brought to a town, ſome would ſay--- "The men that turn the world upſide down, are come hither alſo." Men who love ſin and lived in ſin, diſliked the light of the Goſpel, becauſe it diſcovered their evil deeds. And perſons long uſed to ſuperſtition, error, and devil-worſhip, were unwilling to forſake their old religion, as they called it. But when they ſaw miracles performed before their eyes; when they ſaw numbers of ſick people healed with a word or a touch; when they ſaw ſome of their neighbours forſake the altars of their idols, and become moral and lovely in their conduct, they were forced to ſtop and conſider how theſe things could be, and ſome of them would of courſe go and hear for themſelves. Our text ſuppoſes ſuch a thing; *if there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned*, an unbeliever, an infidel; or an ignorant perſon, one acquainted with Chriſt and ſalvation. God often over-ruled this kind of curioſity for good. *Zaccheus*, a rich publican, wiſhed much to ſee Chriſt when he paſſed through Jericho. He only wanted to gratify his curioſity in ſeeing a man who was ſo much talked of; but Chriſt in mercy called and converted him. It is good to be near Chriſt; he often meets with thoſe who are "in the way," and "is found by thoſe who ſought him not." And it is happy for many that they did not ſuffer their own prejudices, or the fear of man, to prevent their going among ſerious perſons, to hear and judge for themſelves.

III. We obſerve further, that *primitive preaching had a tendency to convince men of their being ſinners, in a ſtate of guilt and danger.*

It was a principal part of the work of the prophets of old, to cry aloud and teſtify againſt the ſins of the

people. John the Baptiſt preached repentance. So did our Lord himſelf. And he commanded that "*repentance* and *remiſſion of ſins* ſhould be preached in his name among all nations"---*repentance*, in order to *remiſſion*. As "the whole need not the phyſician, but the ſick;" as the diſeaſe muſt be felt, before the remedy can be deſired; ſo muſt all men know the diſeaſed and dangerous ſtate of their ſouls, before they can believe in Chriſt "to the ſaving of their ſouls." Accordingly we find St. Peter, on the day of Pentecoſt, charging ſin upon the people of Jeruſalem; the effect of which was, "they were pierced to the heart, and ſaid to Peter and to the reſt of the Apoſtles, "Men and brethren, what ſhall we do?" Thus in our text---the unbeliever, coming into the aſſembly, is convinced of *all*, of all the preachers; whoever preached, his doctrine had this tendency, to convince the man of ſin. This is done, not merely by the power of the word, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, going along with the word. This is one of the great works of the Spirit, as our Saviour promiſed, John xvi. 8, *When he is come he ſhall reprove*, or CONVINCE, *the world of ſin*; it is the ſame word as in the text; it ſignifies to convince by way of argument; to ſtop the mouth of the guilty perſon, convict him by his own conſcience, and leave him without excuſe.

The word of God is the chief mean of convincing people of ſin. Reaſon and conſcience alone are not ſufficient. It is true, that thoſe who "have not a written law, or the Bible, are a law unto themſelves; they ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts," and their conſciences accuſe them when they do evil, and excuſe them when they do well; but all this is done in a very weak and imperfect manner. The light of nature diſcovers *ſome* ſins, but not *all*. It diſcovers ſcarcely any ſins but thoſe that hurt our neighbour. It diſcovers that there is a God, and that he ſhould be worſhipped, but it does not tell us how. It does not tell us half the duties we owe to God, and therefore not half the ſins we commit in not performing

performing them. The light of nature does not ſhew us the *root* of ſin, in our fallen nature. It does not ſhew us what *hearts* we have, *deceitful and deſperately wicked*, as they really are. It cannot ſhew us that a luſtful glance, an angry thought, or a covetous deſire is ſinful, as our Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, declares them all to be. Beſides, natural conſcience is often ſtupid and unfaithful. When men live long in ſin, the conſcience becomes callous and unfeeling, "ſeered, as it were, with an hot iron." It is corrupt, like all the other powers of our ſouls, and is too weak and feeble, without ſuperior aid, to convince us, in a due manner, of our ſinful and dangerous condition.

THE LAW of God, contained in the ten commandments, is an inſtrument of mighty power in the hand of the Spirit, to convince men of ſin. The *word* of the law, as printed in a book, or laid up in the memory, or fixed up in a church, are not of themſelves ſufficient for this purpoſe. No, they muſt be ſpiritually underſtood, and applied to the heart. St. Paul himſelf is a notable inſtance. *I was alive*, ſaith he, *without the law once, but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died.* He never was without *the words* of the law, he knew them from a child---but he was without the true knowledge of the law, as a *ſpiritual* law, requiring "truth in the inward parts," and condemning a ſinful thought. It was the *tenth* commandment that opened his eyes; *I had not known ſin*, he ſaith, *except the law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet*; by this he ſaw that a *deſire* might be ſinful: and ſeeing this, he was convinced of Sin. Where natural conſcience ſees *one* ſin, the law ſhews a *thouſand*. What natural conſcience thought a *mole-hill*, the law ſhews to be a *mountain*. What natural conſcience thought merely *not quite right*, the law ſhews to be a daring act of rebellion, and worthy of eternal death.

For beſides being "*convinced* of all," our text adds, "he is *judged* of all:" he is tried, caſt, and condemned. The conſideration of his own ſin is

fixed on his mind; he cannot forget it, he cannot get rid of it. *My ſin is ever before me*, ſaid the Pſalmiſt. It is brought home to his conſcience, as when Nathan ſaid to David, *Thou art the man*. The truly convinced ſinner receives "the ſentence of death in himſelf." The law ſays, "the ſoul that ſinneth ſhall die." The conſcience ſays, "I have ſinned, and therefore I muſt die." The law ſays, "Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." The conſcience ſays, "I have not continued in all things, therefore I am curſed." It is the office of an enlightened confcience to anticipate the judgement of the great day; *Now* to inſpect the books that will be opened then, and ſo to judge ourſelves that we may not be judged; ſo to condemn ourſelves that we may not then be condemned. Moſt men have ſuch a notion of the mercy of God, as to forget his juſtice and holineſs; they fortify themſelves in his mercy againſt his juſtice. But when a perſon is convinced of ſin, he ſees that God is holy and juſt; and he cannot but dread theſe terrible attributes, till he learns from the Goſpel how God is at once *a juſt God and a Saviour*; *juſt, yet the juſtifier of the ungodly*, who believe in Jeſus.

IV. Another obſervation we make on the text is, Preaching the word tends to diſcloſe the ſecret workings of the heart, which were unobſerved before. *And thus are the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt.*

Moſt men are ſo buſied in worldly affairs, or ſtupified with worldly pleaſures, that they are great ſtrangers to themſelves. They are alſo lulled aſleep by the ſoft preaching of virtue and morality and ſincere obedience, which they flatter themſelves they have, ſo that they give themſelves no trouble about religion. But the faithful preaching of God's word has a tendency to rouſe men from this ſupineneſs. The word of God is a mirror that does not flatter. It ſhews men their hearts. It does not only tell men what they *ought to be*, but ſhews them *what they*

they are. It leads them from obſerving the ſtreams of their evil actions, to trace them up to the fountain; the corrupt fountain of their fallen nature. Thus, when David confeſſes his ſin of adultery, in the Pſalm LI. he acknowledges the ſpring of this horrid evil---*Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* So, when our Lord would convince Nicodemus that he *muſt* be born again, he ſhewed him, that *what was born of the fleſh, was fleſh,* nothing more, nothing better; nothing but corruption and defilement; as Paul confeſſes, *In my fleſh there dwelleth no good thing*; and elſewhere, *the carnal mind is not ſubject to the law of God, neither can it be.* So God declared of the old world---*Every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually.* Now a convinced ſinner knows this, feels this; and thus *the ſecrets of his heart are made manifeſt.* "The Lord opens the root of bitterneſs; makes us ſmell the ſink of ſin; diſcovers the dunghill whence all theſe little ſerpents were bred; ſhews us the rotten core, as well as the worm-eaten ſkin; that the *nature* of the perſon *lies in wickedneſs,* as a mole in the earth, or a carcaſe in putrefaction (1 John v. 19.) all under ſin; no good ſpring in the heart; that there is a poiſon in the heart that taints every work of the hand, imagination, fancy, thoughts of the mind, and motions of the will. He brings a man from the chamber of outward ſins to the cloſet of inward iniquities, till he arrives at the large room of NATURE; bids him ſee if he can find out one clean corner in the heart; and ſo conducts him to the *firſt ſin of Adam*; makes him behold the firſt fountain whence all iſſued; and all little enough to make the proud heart ſtoop to God; this makes a man vile in his own eyes, ſo that he cannot look upon himſelf but with confuſion and an univerſal bluſh." So ſpeaks the excellent *Mr. Charnock.*

Perſons who have not been uſed to hear the Goſpel, are frequently ſurprized, when they ſit under a powerful miniſtry, to hear their own caſe and character ſo exactly deſcribed. It is not uncommon for them to charge

charge their friends with having been to the minister beforehand, to tell them their case. But this is no new thing. The remembrance of one sin leads to the remembrance of another. Sins that have been forgotten many years, have a kind of resurrection in the mind, so that they seem to surround, and terrify the soul of an awakened sinner. Thus it was with the woman of Samaria, who was converted by our Lord at the well; having detected her in the lewd course of life which she led; and being convinced that he was a prophet, she ran to call her neighbours, saying, *Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?* This is the proper and powerful effect of the word of God, which carries with it a mighty and convincing arguement of its truth, as being the word of Him "who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men." The person who thus hears the word to purpose, "knows the plague of his own heart." He boasts no more of *a good heart*. He sees it is full of sin; which he no longer delights in, nor excuses. He sees its horrid evil; described in Scripture as *dirt, dung, plague, ulcers*, and putrefying *sores*; and seeing this in his own heart, he *loaths* himself, and cries with Job, *Lord I am vile! I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*. And this leads us to another observation.

V. When a man is converted to God, he always begins to pray. The person, in our text, already convinced of sin---*falls down on his face, and worships God*. A blind Pagan till now. If he worshipped before, it was Bacchus or Venus perhaps: or a more heathenish Christian; one who never worships at all. For how many are there among us, who so entirely live *without God in the world*, that they never pray. But see the effect of God's word when carried to the heart. Regardless of the eye of man, he prostrates himself in the dust of abasement, before his offended Maker and Judge. This was the symptom of Paul's own conversion. "*Behold he prayeth,*" said Christ concerning him; as a proof that he was another man; a new man.

It

It is ſad to think that ſo many people never pray. A ſhort form of words, always the ſame, and always *unfelt*, is hypocritically offered by ſome in their beds, or when nearly aſleep. By many others this paltry ceremony is quite omitted. Some are aſhamed to pray leſt they ſhould be laughed at for it. Others are afraid, leſt the devil ſhould appear to them. Others pretend they cannot get a private place to pray in. But let me aſk ſuch, Can you not get a private place to ſin in? and if you loved prayer as you now love ſin, you would not make this excuſe. Behold here, a man, ſo overpowered with a ſenſe of the majeſty and juſtice of God; ſo deeply affected with his danger as a ſinner, and ſo eagerly deſirous of his pardoning mercy; that he forgets he is ſurrounded by mortals, and he falls down before his God with the publican's petition—*God, be merciful to me a ſinner!* So have I ſeen a condemned criminal at a human bar, when the fearful ſentence of death has been pronounced, fall down on his knees, and, regardleſs of the gazing throng, implore the favour of the judge. So have I ſeen dying perſons, expecting ſoon to appear before God, cry aloud for mercy, without conſidering who ſurrounded their beds. The place, or the poſture of prayer, is of little conſequence. It might diſturb the public worſhip for perſons to fall down and pray aloud in our aſſemblies; yet when a perſon is greatly affected, it will be difficult to conceal his emotions. He will lift up his heart, if not his voice, to God. And when he goes home, it will not be with the uſual compliment, that he had heard a fine ſermon or a charming preacher; but retiring to ſome ſecret place, he will confeſs and lament his ſins, and ſeek the pardon of them through the blood of Chriſt; while, conſcious alſo of their loathſome defilement, he will earneſtly crave the ſanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. One more obſervation remains.

VI. Converted perſons drop all their prejudices againſt the people of God, and ſpeak honourably of them.

them. *He will report that God is in you of a truth.* It is not unlikely that he ſaid before, "the devil is in you." Profane people indulge themſelves in abuſing religious perſons. They are fond of calling them nick names; they treat them with contempt and ſcorn; and ſometimes abuſe their perſons, injure their property, hurt their character, or hinder their employment. Though religion be protected by the laws of the land, there are a thouſand ways in which ſerious people are now perſecuted, eſpecially where the Goſpel is newly introduced into a place; and the poor, eſpecially, are threatened by their ſuperiors, that they ſhall be deprived of pariſh ſupport, or other aſſiſtance, if they dare to judge for themſelves, and attend the worſhip of God, where they think themſelves profited. But theſe *perſecutors*, (for that is their true character, if they reſtrain men in their religion,) ought to remember, that *the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his ſaints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners have ſpoken againſt him*, Jude 15; for the Lord conſiders what is done to his people as done to himſelf; and he ſays, "it were better for a man to have a mill-ſtone hung about his neck, and be caſt into the ſea with it, than for him to offend or hurt one of the leaſt of his diſciples who believe in him," Mark ix. 42.

But no ſooner does a man come to himſelf, and ſee things as they are, than he forms a very different opinion of godly perſons. They are no longer the objects of contempt and ſcorn. He ſees that they are the excellent of the earth, the children of God, and heirs of eternal glory. He now ſays, *God is in you, of a truth.* Bleſſed truth! Jeſus is "Immanuel, God with us." He is really and truly with his people when they meet to pray and praiſe and hear his word. *Lo! I am with you always*, ſaith he, *even to the end of the world.* And again, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in*

the midſt of them, Matt. xviii. 20. Bleſſed be Jeſus for this precious promiſe, and bleſſed be his name for the fulfilment of it. We know he is with us, to obſerve, guide, aſſiſt, encourage, quicken, approve, and ſucceed us: yea, he comes firſt to bid us welcome. *There am I.*

Now, every converted perſon knows and feels this. He therefore ſays with Jacob---"How aweful is this place; it is the houſe of God and the gate of heaven." Obſerve it is ſaid, "He will *report* that God is with you." He will not be aſhamed to tell the world ſo; and he will tell it to others, that they may come too. Juſt as ſome of our Lord's firſt diſciples did. When *Andrew* was called by Chriſt, he went and called his brother *Peter*; and when *Philip* was called he invited *Nathanael*; and when *Nathanael* made ſome objections, and ſaid, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip ſaid, *Come and ſee.*" In like manner, let all thoſe who have felt the power of God under the word, invite their friends and neighbours to hear and judge for themſelves.

APPLICATION.

And thus, my friends, we have ſeen a picture of primitive religion, ſuch as prevailed in the firſt and beſt days of Chriſtianity. And now let us enquire, Is our religion like this? Is it thus in our aſſemblies? Not in all. In ſome places what irreverence? laughing, ogling, ſleeping! The preacher himſelf is perhaps in fault. Perhaps it is not the Goſpel that he preaches; or, he is unaffected by it. He performs his duty as the ſchool-boy his taſk. The people come expecting nothing; they go away having obtained nothing; and a pious ſpectator is conſtrained to reverſe the text, and ſay, "God is *not* here, of a truth!"

But where the Goſpel of Jeſus is faithfully preached, the powerful effects, mentioned in the text, will, by the bleſſing of God, more or leſs follow. If the doctrine tend "to humble the ſinner, to exalt the

Saviour,

Saviour, and to promote holineſs," Jeſus, by his Spirit, is there, and will ſet his ſeal to the heavenly truth. Both the Law and the Goſpel, rightly diſpenſed, will tend to convince men of their loſt and ruined ſtate, to diſcloſe the ſecret thoughts of the heart; and when this is done, to lead the ſinner in earneſt prayer to ſeek ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. Has the word of God had this effect upon us? To know and feel ourſelves miſerable ſinners is the firſt main point in religion. Without this we are blind to every thing elſe in Scripture. Without this we cannot pray ſincerely, or do any thing in religion aright. Sin cannot be taken away till it be diſcovered; nor can we ever become what we ought to be, till we know what we are. And when this is rightly known, you ſee what follows. You ſee the convinced ſinner proſtrate on the ground. Has a ſenſe of ſin, an apprehenſion of its danger, and a hatred of its evil, brought us to our knees? If ſo, bleſs God for it. It is a good beginning. This is the finger of God. Wait upon God; and he who hath begun the good work will finiſh it.

What an evidence does this ſubject afford us of the truth and reality of the religion of Chriſt. Can any power but that which is divine, thus enlighten the mind, convince the conſcience, terrify the ſoul, diſcloſe the ſecrets of the heart, humble the proud rebel, and at once turn his affections into another channel? No, no. This is the work of God; and the Scriptures, by which he effects it, are the word of God, and he who believeth hath hereby "a witneſs in himſelf" that they are ſo. May theſe bleſſed truths, ſo uſeful and neceſſary to the converſion and ſalvation of ſouls, be every where proclaimed; and may theſe, their bleſſed effects, be every where produced; ſo ſhall multitudes be ſaved, and glory, glory, glory, be given to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.

5 DE60

A SERMON ON JOHN i. 29.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the world.

THERE is a vaſt curioſity in the mind of man, and the world abounds with objects to gratify it. The heavens, the earth, the ſea, are full of wonders; and had not man ſinned, he might always have read the book of nature with new delight, and have ſeen the glory of God in every line. But now, unhappy, fallen man, turns his back upon God, while he ſurveys his works; and thinks every trifle better worth his notice than his Maker. In infancy, in youth, in middle life, in old age, a conſtant ſucceſſion of vanities courts his attention, and he never thinks of beholding Chriſt till he dies, and appears before his tribunal.

Like John the Baptiſt, whoſe words theſe are, I would cry aloud, and ſay to my fellow men, *Behold the Lamb of God*---" turn away your eyes from beholding vanities;" and fix your attention on an object the moſt wonderful, the moſt pleaſing, and the moſt uſeful, that the eyes of men or angels ever beheld.

John was the harbinger of Chriſt, " the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord." With ſtrict auſterity of manners and with great plainneſs of ſpeech, he preached repentance--" Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His honeſt labours were crowned with great ſucceſs; and thouſands of all deſcriptions flocked from the cities and towns of Judea into the ſolitary wilderneſs, and, touched with compunction

for their ſins, applied to him, ſaying---"What muſt we do?" O, that in this our day, we could ſee ſuch an awakening!

Thus the prophet proceeded, till Jeſus Chriſt entered on the public ſtage of action, and came forth from the wilderneſs, where he had ſuffered all kinds of temptation. John, far from pretending to be the Meſſiah, directed his diſciples to Jeſus, ſaying, in the words of our text, *Behold the Lamb of God.*

In theſe words let us conſider,

I. The great object preſented to our view---*The Lamb of God*, and

II. The *attention* we ought to pay him---*Behold the Lamb!*

I. The object ſet before us is *Jeſus Chriſt*, here called, the Lamb of God.

No doubt the expreſſion alludes to the ſacrifices of the Jews, in which conſiſted a principal part of their worſhip, as appointed of God himſelf. In this way God was worſhipped from the beginning of the world. We find Abel, the ſon of Adam, offering up lambs, "the firſtlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof," and this was a ſacrifice well pleaſing to God, becauſe it was offered up in faith. He believed the promiſe of a Saviour, which God had made to his father; he truſted in him, and was juſtified. It was for this purpoſe in the firſt place, and not for amuſement or profit, that Abel was "a keeper of ſheep;" and it was probably with the ſkins of lambs, killed for ſacrifices by Adam and his wife, that the Lord God clothed them, inſtead of the covering of fig leaves which they had made for themſelves. Thus, all believers in Jeſus are clothed with his righteouſneſs, while blind phariſees vainly ſtrive to hide the nakedneſs of their ſouls with their own "filthy rags." Thus God continued to be worſhipped by his own people for four thouſand years; even till, "in the fullneſs of time, God ſent forth his own Son," the very perſon that John here points out as the Lamb of God. And it is remarkable, that almoſt all nations, however they differed in other

notions

notions of religion, retained ſomething of ſacrifices. The ſons of Noah, wherever diſperſed, carried with them this true notion, that "without ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion." And many of them, miſtaking the ancient promiſes of the great ſacrifice of the Son of God, offered up a man as an atonement for their ſouls. This was practiſed in England before the Romans conquered it; and is practiſed ſtill in the newly diſcovered iſlands of the South Seas. May God haſten the time, when his glorious Goſpel ſhall be preached in all the world, and every Pagan ſinner be directed to the Lamb of God, whoſe "blood alone cleanſeth from all ſin!"

Various creatures were uſed in ſacrifice by the law of Moſes, but the principal and moſt conſtant victim was the *Lamb*. One was offered up at the temple every morning, and another every evening; and on the Sabbath day, two in the morning, and two in the evening. Once a year there was a remarkable ordinance—The Paſſover. It was firſt inſtituted when the children of Iſrael came out of Egypt. On that dreadful night when God plagued the Egyptians by ſlaying their firſt-born, he ordered his own people to kill a lamb, and to ſprinkle its blood upon the door-poſts of their houſes; and when the deſtroying angel went forth in the night to ſlay the Egyptians, he ſhould *paſs over* the houſes ſo diſtinguiſhed, and not hurt them. Once a year, ever after, they were to obſerve the ſame ceremony; and ſomething like it they ſtill obſerve. Now we are ſure, from the New Teſtament, that all this was done to preach Chriſt unto them, and eſpecially to us. St. Paul ſays, 1 Cor. v. 7, *Chriſt, our paſſover, is ſacrificed for us.* The paſchal lamb was without blemiſh; Chriſt was free from all ſin, original or actual. The lamb muſt be of the firſt year: ſo Chriſt laid down his life in the prime of his days. The lamb muſt be ſo ſlain that his blood might copiouſly flow: ſo the Redeemer ſhed his blood abundantly, by his agony, by the thorns, the ſcourge, the nails, and the ſpear; and yet, according to the

type, not a bone of him was broken. In the temple-ſervice, the lamb was killed *before the whole aſſembly*; in like manner our Saviour ſuffered at the great feſtival in view of the whole aſſembled nation. The blood of the lamb was ſprinkled on the door-poſts; the blood of Chriſt muſt be applied to the conſcience, and is therefore called "the blood of ſprinkling." That blood ſecured every family where it was ſprinkled; the deſtroying angel was forbidden to hurt them: ſo the merits of Jeſus ſkreen every believer from the ſtroke of offended juſtice, and the bitter pains of eternal death. "What," ſaith the pious Hervey on this paſſage, "What muſt have become of the Iſraelite, who, truſting to the uprightneſs of his heart, ſhould neglect to make uſe of this *divinely appointed* ſafeguard? He muſt inevitably have periſhed with the death of his firſt-born. Equally certain, but infinitely more dreadful, will be *his condemnation*, who, before the omniſcient judge, ſhall preſume to plead his own integrity, or confide in his repentance, and reject the atonement of the dying Jeſus."

The offering up of ſacrifices was the chief part of the religion of the Old Teſtament church. Sacrifices were to believers then, nearly, what ſacraments are to believers now. Chriſt the Purifier, Chriſt the peace-maker, was the ſubſtance of them. The animal offered muſt be clean, without ſpot or blemiſh; that it might ſignify the perfect purity of Chriſt, *as of a lamb without blemiſh and without ſpot.* The prieſt laid his hands upon the creature offered for ſin, while the ſinner confeſſed his iniquity over the head of the ſacrifice; and thus ſin was, typically, transferred to the victim; which was therefore called *ſin*, or *guilt*. Thus God "laid upon his Son the iniquities of us all;" and he became "*ſin* for us, that we might be made *righteouſneſs* in him." The ſlain ſacrifices were burnt on the altar. So Chriſt was conſumed by the flames of his love for his Father and his people, and at the ſame time by the flames of the divine wrath againſt ſin, which he had

had undertaken to bear. There was a ſweet ſmelling ſavour of incenſe that aſcended with the flames and ſmoke; and this was to ſignify how acceptable to God was the death of his Son, *who gave himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour*, Epheſ. v. 2. The *peace-offerings* were not entirely conſumed, but the perſon who offered them might, and did eat of them. A feaſt was frequently made of them, which was a kind of ſacrament of communion; a type of that communion which believers in Chriſt now have, with him and with one another, in the ſacred ordinance of the Lord's ſupper.

But Jeſus Chriſt is called in our text, *The lamb of* GOD. This name is given him by way of eminence, and to ſhew his *ſuperiority* over every other ſacrifice. He is *the Lamb of God*, as he was choſen, appointed, and prepared by God the Father, from all eternity. In common ſacrifices every man choſe his own lamb; here God only choſe and appointed. "God ſo loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," that he might be the great ſacrifice. His infinite ſuperiority alſo appears in that he was but *once* offered. Other ſacrifices were repeated annually, monthly, yea daily; this ſhewed their imperfection, and that they could not, by any virtue of their own, take away ſin—*But this man, after he had offered* ONE *ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God: for by* ONE *offering he hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*; that is—he hath done all that was neceſſary for the pardon and complete acceptance with God of all thoſe who believe in him, and who were ſet apart in the purpoſe of God for glory, Heb. x.

This is that peculiar excellence in the Lamb of God, on account of which we are invited to behold him. Behold him, ſinner! for he *taketh away ſin*. The word *taketh away* ſignifies *he beareth away*. This denotes that ſin is a *heavy burden*. And would to God this were ſeriouſly conſidered. *Fools make a mock at ſin*; they make light of it: they make a

jeſt of it; but thereby they ſhew their folly. Let them think a moment (if minds ſo light *can* think) let them think—what it was that filled the world with "mourning, lamentation, and woe?" what produced all the ſorrows and ſufferings that we ſee, or feel, or fear? Was it not ſin, accurſed ſin? Let them conſider what a burden it is to a guilty conſcience, when once its evil is diſcovered and its effects dreaded; for though "the ſpirit of a man may ſuſtain his infirmity, a wounded ſpirit who can bear." The Pſalmiſt, a type of this ſin-bearing Lamb, cries out—*There is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh, becauſe of thine anger; neither is there any reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſin: for mine iniquities are gone over mine head as an heavy burden; they are too heavy for me,* Pſ. xxxviii. 3, 4. Life itſelf is a burden to a mind oppreſſed with the guilt of ſome particular ſin, or of ſin in general. This led Judas to ſuicide, and has led many others to the ſame fatal end. But this is the way to encreaſe the burden, not to loſe it; for damned ſouls in hell muſt for ever lie under the intolerable weight. There *the worm dieth not,* even the worm of a corroding conſcience, always ſtung by remorſe, *and the* furious *fire* of divine reſentment *is never quenched.*

But, bleſſings for ever be on the dear Lamb of God! He bore our ſins, and bore them away. In the fifty-third chapter of Iſaiah, where the ſufferings of Chriſt are wonderfully deſcribed, it is ſaid, Ver. 6, *The lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all;* and St. Peter ſays, 1 Pet. ii. 24, *He himſelf, bare our ſins in his own body on the tree.* As our Surety, he made himſelf anſwerable for our ſins, ſo that they were imputed to him; he bore the puniſhment due to them, even the wrath and curſe of God, which, if he had not borne, muſt have ſunk each of us into the pit of hell. And O what did Chriſt endure when this heavy burden was laid upon him! Hear his groans in the garden, "*My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful,* or *very heavy, even unto death: Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*—let the ſeaſon of my ſufferings be

ſhorten-

ſhortened." See the bloody ſweat that fell from him in the agony. This was the effect of the burden of our ſins, which then were made "to meet upon him." There was a very remarkable type of this under the law, Levit. xvi. On the great day of atonement two goats were provided. One of them was killed for a ſin offering: On the other goat "Aaron ſhall lay both his hands, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and ſhall ſend him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderneſs: and the goat ſhall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, and he ſhall let go the goat into the wilderneſs." Theſe goats ſignified Jeſus Chriſt; the one ſignified Chriſt *dying*, the other Chriſt *living*: Chriſt as *dying*, ſatisfied for our ſins: but Chriſt as *living* juſtifies us from them: "he died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification." As the living goat was to have the ſins of the people laid upon him, and he was to carry them away with him into the wilderneſs; ſo God laid our iniquities on Chriſt, and he takes them away, as it were, into a land not inhabited, where they ſhall be heard of no more; and this is exactly what our text declares, and what God has elſewhere promiſed, *Your ſins and your iniquities will I remember no more —if they be ſought for they ſhall not be found—as far as the eaſt is from the weſt, ſo far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us.*

Thus the *guilt* of them is for ever removed from true believers: And not only the *guilt*, when they are juſtified, but the *power* alſo of them is taken away by ſanctification. He who gave his dear Son *for* us, gives alſo his Holy Spirit *to* us. He will not ſuffer ſin to rule. They are united to Chriſt by faith, and "ſanctified by the faith that is in him." Yea, finally, he will remove ſin altogether; its being, as well as its effects. "The body of ſin and death" ſhall be purified in the grave, and body and ſoul ſhall be eternally pure and happy with Jeſus.

Further to recommend to our notice this Lamb

of

of God, the wide extent of his glorious work is mentioned in our text—"he taketh away the ſin of the world." By this expreſſion we cannot underſtand that he takes away the guilt and power of ſin from every man in the world, for, if ſo, none would be damned. Alas! we plainly ſee thouſands from whom neither the guilt nor the power is taken away; we ſee thouſands unconcerned about the removal of their ſins; we ſee thouſands who think they can take away their own ſins; and thouſands who deſpiſe the blood of Chriſt, and trample it under their infidel feet. But by "the world," and "the whole world," we are to underſtand the whole world of the elect; the whole world of believers; the *redeemed of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:* All, in every place, and ye who believe in Jeſus, without any diſtinction. And this expreſſion was often uſed by our Lord and his apoſtles, becauſe it was a fond notion of the Jews, that the Meſſiah was to come only to them; and even the believing Jews at firſt were offended that the Goſpel was preached to the Gentiles. It is alſo for the encouragement of all ſorts of ſinners, of the chief of ſinners, that this general term is uſed. Thoſe who know and feel that they have a world of ſin, a world of guilt, lying upon them, may here find comfort—he taketh away the ſin of the world. Yea, doubtleſs, there was a ſufficiency in the blood of Chriſt to take away all the ſins of all the world, had it been ſo appointed. If all the whole world were to have been actually ſaved, there would have been no other offering, no greater offering, nor any more ſuffering than Chriſt endured. But Chriſt had in view his *church*, his *people*, his *ſheep*, all of whom ſhall hear his voice, believe, and be ſaved. Nevertheleſs, the univerſality of the phraſe is a great encouragement to ſinners who are ſeeking ſalvation; for no ſinner, in all the world, let him be who he will, or what he will, ſhall be excluded from the benefit of Chriſt's death, if he come to him by faith. "Him that cometh to me," ſaid he, "I will in no wiſe caſt out."

II. We

II. We are now to conſider what that attention is, which we are here called upon to pay to Chriſt. *Behold, behold* the Lamb of God.

When John ſpake theſe words, Jeſus was in ſight; Jeſus was coming to him. John pointed to him with his finger. But he did not mean that his diſciples ſhould only look at him with their bodily eyes, but that they ſhould become his diſciples and followers, which they did; that they ſhould view him by *faith*, as the promiſed Meſſiah; and admire, receive, and prize him, as the Saviour of the world. *We* cannot now ſee Chriſt with our bodily eyes, but, by divine grace, we may look unto him and be ſaved.

Our *attention* to Chriſt is required by the Goſpel. Let us turn away our eyes from beholding worldly vanities. The eye is never ſatisfied with ſeeing them; it always craves ſomething new. But here is the grandeſt object that ever eyes beheld. Do men eagerly deſire to ſee extraordinary perſons? here is the moſt glorious perſon that ever was ſeen. The queen of Sheba came a great way to ſee Solomon; "but a greater than Solomon is here." When a *king* or an emperor appears in public, crowds are anxious to behold him. Here is the King of kings, the King of the world. At the aſſizes, every one wiſhes to ſee the judge. Here is the great *Judge* of quick and dead, from whoſe ſacred lips each of us ſhall receive our ſentence. *Generals* and *Admirals* who have had great ſucceſs in war, are commonly objects of peculiar regard. Here is the *Conqueror* of the world, of ſin, of hell, who led captivity captive, and bought our freedom with his blood. Here is an *Orator*, whoſe words not only move the living, but raiſe the dead. Here is a *Phyſician*, who has cured millions of dying ſouls, and never failed in a ſingle caſe. In a word, Behold your SAVIOUR!

It is the look of *faith* that is chiefly intended. *Faith* in Chriſt is deſcribed by various names, according

cording to the various names of Chriſt. When Chriſt is repreſented as a *foundation*, then faith is *reſting* upon him. If he be compared to *food*, then faith is *eating* and *drinking*. When he is called a *gift*, then faith is *receiving him*. If he is a *refuge*, faith is *flying* to him. When he is repreſented as *calling* ſinners, then faith is *hearing* him and *coming* to him: and here, where Chriſt is repreſented as a glorious *object*, faith is *beholding* him.

It is repreſented in the ſame manner by our Lord himſelf, John iii. 14, *As Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh but have eternal life.* When the Jews were dying by the bite of ſerpents, they were cured merely by looking at the brazen ſerpent; ſo, whoever is ready to periſh in his ſins, let him look to Jeſus, and he ſhall be ſaved.

Looking is an act of the mind: it ſuppoſes ſome *knowledge* of Chriſt, which is elſewhere called *ſeeing the Son*, and joined with *believing on him*. It ſuppoſes a conviction of the *need* of Chriſt; looking to Jeſus is the act of him who wants to be ſaved. It ſuppoſes that the ſoul *deſpairs* of finding help from any other quarter; it is looking *from* every thing elſe, in order to believe in him. It ſuppoſes a perſuaſion of his *ability* to ſave, to ſave to the uttermoſt; and it includes ſome humble degree of *hope*, that looking to him will not be in vain.

Thoſe who thus behold Chriſt by faith will alſo behold him with *affection*. With what eyes, think you, did they look at Chriſt, who had been healed and helped by him? The ſick, the blind, the lame, the dead, who had felt his miraculous power in their recovery? With eyes, melting in tears of gratitude, would they gaze on their kind benefactor, their great deliverer. O with what joy and love, ſhould ſaved ſinners behold the dear Redeemer! Yea, it will be the heaven of heaven thus to behold him for ever.

APPLI-

APPLICATION.

And now, having conſidered what a great and glorious object Jeſus Chriſt is, and what regard we ought to pay him, let us aſk the queſtion, Have we complied with this eaſy, pleaſant, reaſonable command, in the text? Have we in the *attention*, with *faith*, with *affection*, beheld this dear Lamb of God? Ah, Sirs, are not ſome of your hearts fixed on very different objects; your worldly gain, the gaieties of the world, the baſe luſts of the fleſh? Are not theſe your favourite objects? O conſider this, you that forget God. What can all theſe do for you? Even now they ſatisfy not. But what will they do for you in a dying hour? O be perſuaded to look to Jeſus. How elſe will you look death in the face; how elſe will you dare to look the neglected Saviour in the face, when you ſee him on his throne of judgment. What will all the world think of you, when you ſhall be pointed out before them, and it ſhall be proclaimed—"here is a man, that never thought it worth his while to look at Jeſus?" Will not all heaven ſay, "Let him be damned. If he even was not worth a look, let him be baniſhed from it for ever." O ſinner, if you would have Jeſus look upon you *then*, look upon him *now*; and if you know not how to do it, pray him to teach you, and aſk of him "eye-ſalve that thou mayeſt ſee."

Are any here, who wiſh that their ſins may be taken away? Their ſins are many, and lie heavy on their conſciences, and they can find no relief. *Behold the lamb of God*; he *only* taketh away ſin. Perhaps you have been looking elſewhere. You have been looking to yourſelf, your own goodneſs, your honeſty, your church-goings, prayers, and ſacraments. Are theſe Saviours? Were theſe appointed of God to take away ſin? They are good things in their places, but very bad things to be put in the place of Chriſt. Away with them all in point of de-

dependence, and for the purpose of acceptance. With holy Paul you must count them all loss and dung, that you may win Christ and be found in him. Look to nothing but Jesus; for only he taketh away the sin of the world.

And to you *believer* also, we still say, *Behold the Lamb of God.* This must be your daily business as long as you live. And nothing can be so useful. Have you a hard heart? look to him and it will melt. *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.* Are you cast down and full of fears—"they looked to him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." Say with Jonah in the whale's belly, *I will look again.* Would you obtain genuine humility? A sight of Christ must effect it. Job and Isaiah got it by a view of the glory of Christ. Would you entertain a constant hatred of sin? Behold the lamb of God, bleeding for it on the cross. Would you be truly holy? Behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus, and you shall be transformed into the same image from glory to glory. Would you be bold for God, and constant in his cause? Behold the patient Lamb of God, who has left us an example that we should walk in his steps. Thus, Christian, persist in looking to Jesus daily by faith; till death shall shift the scene, and change faith into sight. Then shall you see him as he is; no longer "through a glass darkly, but face to face;" nor shall you evermore need the exhortation in the text, Behold the Lamb of God.

5 DE60

SERMON,

ON

ACTS ix. 11.

Behold, he prayeth!

THE grace of God was never more glorioufly diſplayed than in the Converſion of St. Paul. Speaking of it himſelf, he ſays, *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*; and, *In me, Jeſus Chriſt ſhewed forth all long ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.* The change that was wrought in him was ſo ſudden and remarkable, that the diſciples of Chriſt at Damaſcus were afraid it was not real. To remove their ſuſpicions, our Lord aſſures Ananias, their miniſter, that he was certainly a changed man; *for, Behold, he prayeth!* As if he had ſaid, "You need not be afraid of him now. He was a bad man, but now he is a new man. He breathed out threatenings and ſlaughter, but now he breathes out prayers and ſupplications. *Behold, he prayeth!*"

As Paul's praying is here mentioned by Jeſus Chriſt as a proof of his Converſion, we ſhall take occaſion from theſe words to ſhew, that

A praying perſon is a gracious perſon.

This important truth will appear with the ſtronger evidence by conſidering the hiſtory of Paul's converſion, as recorded in this chapter.

Paul was the ſon of Jewiſh parents; but being born in the city of Tarſus, was entitled to the privileges of a Roman citizen. He was brought up to the buſineſs of a tent maker; for it was the laudable

cuſtom of the Jews, however rich, to teach their children ſome trade. He had, however, a good education, and was ſent to Jeruſalem, where he ſtudied the Jewiſh religion under the care of Gamaliel, a learned doctor of the law. He alſo joined the ſect of the Phariſees, who were in great eſteem at that time for their apparent piety and zeal. But he unhappily imbibed their ſelf-righteous notions, their bigotry, and their bitter hatred to Jeſus Chriſt and his followers. Paul, probably, had opportunity to hear the diſcourſes and ſee the miracles of Jeſus, but they made no ſaving impreſſions on his mind; on the contrary, he became the implacable enemy of his followers. With all his profeſſion of religion he was a proud man, depending on his own goodneſs for ſalvation, and therefore not at all diſpoſed to reliſh the humbling, ſelf-denying religion of Chriſt, nor to join himſelf with the deſpiſed Nazarenes. Yea, ſuch were his prejudices, that he became "a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious."

The firſt we read of him in the book of the Acts is, that he aſſiſted at the cruel murder of Stephen, the firſt Chriſtian martyr; for he took care of the clothes of thoſe who ſtoned him, and thereby ſhewed his approbation of the bloody deed. After this, he was very active in the perſecution. He made "havock of the church, entering into every houſe, and dragging away women as well as men, committed them to jail," that they might be put to death. He "impriſoned, beat, and puniſhed," all the believers he could find in any of the ſynagogues; and "being exceedingly mad" againſt the Chriſtians, he obliged many of them to take refuge from his fury, by flying to diſtant places. Not content with this, he applied to the High Prieſt for authority to extend his perſecution to the city of Damaſcus, which was 160 miles off. On this cruel expedition he ſet out, "breathing threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord."

Who would ever have thought that this man ſhould

ſhould become a Chriſtian, a preacher, an apoſtle, a martyr? Was there any thing in him that could entitle him to the favour of God? Some have ſuppoſed ſo, in order to leſſen the free, ſovereign grace of God in his converſion. They tell us he was ſincere in his way, had "virtuous habits," and therefore had a previous diſpoſition to receive the Goſpel. Nothing can be more falſe. He tells us himſelf he was "the chief of ſinners;" he was "in the fleſh;" "he went about to eſtabliſh his own righteouſneſs, not ſubmitting himſelf to the righteouſneſs of God." Surely here was nothing to recommend him to mercy; but every thing that might provoke the Almighty to deſtroy him, for ever. But "God's ways are not as man's ways, nor his thoughts as man's thoughts." Paul "was a veſſel of mercy;" "ſeparated from his mother's womb;" in the counſels of God; but the call was deferred till a time, when the freeneſs, power, and riches of grace might appear with the brighteſt luſtre.

Paul was now within ſight of Damaſcus, enjoying the thoughts of his expected ſucceſs; when, ſuddenly, in a moment, there appeared a light in the firmament, a dazzling brightneſs, far above that of the ſun, which was then ſhining in its meridian ſplendour. It was not a flaſh of lightning, but a continued glory, compoſed of rays which darted from the body of our Saviour, who condeſcended perſonally to appear for the calling of this atrocious ſinner. At the ſight of this prodigious ſplendour, Paul, and all his companions, "fell to the earth," dazzled and confounded. While proſtrate on the ground, a voice full of aweful majeſty pronounced theſe words—*Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* It was Jeſus who ſpake; but Paul knew him not; yet ſuppoſing it muſt be ſome divine perſonage, he ſummoned up ſufficient courage to ſay, *Who art thou, Lord?* And he immediately replied, with a ſolemnity and endearment peculiar to himſelf, and which pierced the rebel's heart—*I am Jeſus the*

Nazarene whom thou perſecuteſt: It is hard for thee to kick againſt the goads.

Obſerve here, that Jeſus Chriſt accounts *himſelf* perſecuted, when his poor members are perſecuted. Paul thought he was puniſhing only a deſpicable ſet of ſilly enthuſiaſts, who had forſaken the church, and eſpouſed the cauſe of the crucified Jeſus; but Chriſt takes up the cauſe, and lets him know, that he thought *himſelf* injured by the injuries done to his followers. Let this be a check to thoſe thoughtleſs perſons who diſturb and oppoſe religious people in their devotions. You may be as much miſtaken as Paul was; for aught you know, the people you deſpiſe may be dear to God. If their religion be wrong, it is none of your buſineſs to puniſh them for it. Leave that to God. *You* are not their Judge. But if their religion be right? what then are you doing? You are *fighting againſt God*, and in ſo doing you are hurting yourſelf. For ſo our Lord adds, reſpecting Saul; *it is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks* or *goads*; alluding to oxen urged on to labour by pricking them with goads; if, inſtead of quickening their pace, they kick againſt the inſtrument that wounded them, they only hurt themſelves the more. Juſt ſo it is with wicked perſecutors; their rage is impotent as it is fooliſh; they cannot hinder the deſigns of God, but they may and will hurt their own ſouls.

The Saviour aſks him WHY?—*Why* perſecuteſt thou me? Could Saul give any good anſwer to this queſtion? Can any perſecutor give a good anſwer to it? And what anſwer wilt thou give, O wretched man, to this queſtion, when the glorious Jeſus ſhall put it to thee at the judgement day? "Sinner, why didſt thou diſturb, abuſe, and injure my ſerious followers upon earth?" Alas, thou wilt be ſpeechleſs. Ask thyſelf the queſtion *now*, and thou wilt perſecute no more.

How aſtoniſhed muſt Saul be to find that it was JESUS who now ſpake to him from the heavenly glory! *I am Jeſus, the Nazarene*—he who was deſpiſed and re-

rejected of men; he who was treated as a vile impostor, and put to a cruel, shameful death. How must he be surprised to find that Jesus was still alive, that the account of his resurrection was actually true; consequently that he was really the Messiah, the king of the Jews, and the Saviour of the world? And observe that Christ owns the name of scorn by which he was distinguished—*the Nazarene*. It was a name of contempt and reproach, and on that account affixed to his cross. But Jesus, in all his celestial glory, owns the name, *I am Jesus, the Nazarene*. Let this teach us to take up the cross, and cheerfully bear a *nick name* for his sake; yea, let us rejoice and be exceeding glad that we are "counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

What could Saul now expect? Convinced of his enormous guilt, what could he expect but sudden "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power?" But the Lord had designs of mercy towards him, and towards thousands by him. The power of the Spirit of God accompanied this vision and these words, or he would have only been affrighted, not converted. We do not find that the soldiers who were with him were changed, though, no doubt, they were alarmed. If God were to speak to men in thunder and lightning and earthquake, by voices from heaven, or visions from the dead, this would not change the heart. No. Nothing but grace will do this. But the heart of Saul was now subdued, and he discovers this by the first word he utters—*Trembling and astonished, he said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* Thus resigning himself into the hands of Jesus, he obtained forgiveness. He is then directed to go into Damascus, when he should receive further instruction. Then he arose from the earth, and was led by the hand, for he had lost his sight, into the city; where he continued blind for three days, and did neither eat nor drink; spending, probably, the whole time in serious meditation and fervent prayer.

At the end of three days, the Lord, pitying the ſorrows of this afflicted man, appeared to a diſciple in the city, named Ananias, and directed him to go into *Straight ſtreet*, and inquire at the houſe of a perſon named *Judas*, for one called *Saul* of *Tarſus*, adding the words of our text—*Behold, he prayeth!* Ananias was ſtill afraid to go; and therefore ſaid, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy ſaints at Jeruſalem: and here he hath authority from the chief prieſts, to bind all that call on thy name" But the objection was over-ruled. Ananias went. By his means, Saul was inſtantly delivered from his blindneſs, filled with the Holy Ghoſt, was baptized, and having received meat, was ſtrengthened. Afterwards, as we all know, "he preached the faith which he once deſtroyed," and was, for many years, a moſt eminent and uſeful apoſtle of Chriſt, in ſpreading the knowledge of the Goſpel among many nations.

The converſion of Saul, afterwards called Paul, has been juſtly conſidered as affording a very ſtrong argument for the truth of the Chriſtian religion. And it is worth our while briefly to conſider it in that view. If we believe what St. Paul tells us of his own converſion, we muſt of courſe believe all that the Bible ſays; for his doctrines perfectly agree with the reſt of the Scriptures; and he declares that he received his doctrines, not from men, but from God. And we certainly have reaſon to believe what St. Paul ſays of his converſion, unleſs it could be proved, either that he was an *impoſtor*, and meant to deceive; or, that he was a *weak man*, and ſo was deceived by others.

Now, there is no reaſon to think that Paul was an *Impoſtor*, and meant to deceive mankind. Impoſtors always, ſeek themſelves. They deceive to get *money*, or *power*, or *fame*, or *pleaſure*. But Paul ſought none of theſe: *not money*; he forſook the rich party of the Jews, to join the poor party of the Chriſtians; for the firſt Chriſtians were ſo poor in general

general, that they were ſupported by the contributions of the few rich that were among them. Paul himſelf frequently worked with his own hands. Nobody ever ſuſpected Paul of being rich.

He ſought not *power*. Who could give it him? All the powers of the earth, whether Jewiſh or Heathen, were againſt the Chriſtians, and were employed to cruſh them. Great numbers were perſecuted and put to death, and St. Paul himſelf at laſt.

He ſought not *fame*: he became *infamous* in the eſteem of the world; *being defamed*, ſaith he, *we entreat*; *we are accounted the filth and off-ſcouring of all things*. The name of a *Nazarene*, and afterwards that of a *Chriſtian*, was contemptible and odious to the laſt degree.

Nor was it ſenſual *pleaſure* he ſought. No. He took up the croſs when he took up Chriſtianity. He knew nothing of carnal eaſe, or the delight of ſenſe. His life was all activity and ſuffering. "He was ſtoned, he was beaten with rods; twice he ſuffered ſhipwreck; he was in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderneſs; in wearineſs and painfulneſs, in watchings often, in cold and nakedneſs." All theſe things prove that Paul was no impoſtor; he certainly believed what he taught, and he had no bad deſign in teaching what he believed.

It is equally certain that Paul was not deceived by others. Who ſhould deceive him? Not his former companions: They would have murdered him for the change. Not the poor timid Chriſtians: They were afraid to receive him when changed. Who could form ſuch a light in the heavens! Who could form ſuch a ſound in the air? Who could ſtrike him and his numerous companions to the ground? Who could make Paul blind for three days? And when blind, who could reſtore him to ſight? Indeed, there is nothing in Paul's character than can lead us to ſuſpect that he

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was deceived. He was not a weak man, nor an enthuſiaſt. And his whole conduct for twenty years after his converſion, the temper he diſcovered, the doctrines he delivered, the apologies that he made, and the letters that he wrote; as fully prove that he was not a weak enthuſiaſt, and ſo deceived, as they do that he was no deceiver. And if Paul was neither deceived in what he believed, nor a deceiver in what he profeſſed, it muſt follow undeniably that the Chriſtian ſyſtem is not a deluſion, but that it is the truth of God, the wiſdom of God, and the power of God unto ſalvation. And let this be an anſwer to thoſe, who may try to cheat you of your faith and of your ſalvation, by pretending contradictions and blunders in the holy Scriptures; they may tell you that this and that book was not written by the author whoſe name it bears, and that there is ſuch and ſuch a miſtake in names and dates. Inſtead of regarding their little quibbles and cavilling objections, aſk them to account for the converſion of St. Paul, upon any other principle than that of the truth of the Chriſtian religion, and they will be confounded.

But to return to the deſign firſt propoſed. We intended to ſhew, that *a praying perſon is a gracious perſon*, for Jeſus Chriſt, in order to prove that Saul was converted, ſaid, *Behold, he prayeth.*

This obſervation made reſpecting him is very remarkable, if you conſider that he had been a *phariſee*. Now the phariſees were ſo called becauſe they ſeparated themſelves from others, profeſſing to be more ſtrict in all religious duties and ceremonies than their neighbours. "They faſted twice a week," and "they made *long prayers*;" they prayed "ſtanding in the ſynagogues," and even "in the corners of the ſtreets;" they prayed over and over again, "thinking to be heard for their much ſpeaking." Is it not ſtrange then, that our Lord ſhould ſay of Paul, *Behold, he prayeth?* Was it a new thing for a Phariſee to pray?

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There was certainly now ſomething very different in his praying, from what he had been uſed to. All his former prayers are here reckoned for nothing; for now he prayeth, that is, he now begins to pray. It may be obſerved that the Phariſees were fond of making *public* their prayers; we no where read of their praying in *private*, and it is likely that they ſeldom did: for our Lord directs his diſciples not to make their prayers in the ſtreets, but to enter into their *cloſets* and pray. Probably, therefore, this was the firſt time in all his life, that he ever prayed in ſecret. And there are now many people who would not be thought to neglect their prayers at church, who make no conſcience of praying at home. But we cannot well ſuppoſe that perſon to be a real Chriſtian who does not pray alone.

The prayer that Paul now offered was *ſincere*. He had prayed often with his lips, now his *heart* prays. There is a great deal of ſin committed by ſome people in their prayers. Like the hypocrites of old, "they draw nigh to God with their mouths, and honour him with their lips, but their *heart* is far from him." Chriſt charged the Phariſees with doing ſo, Matt. xv. 7, 8. Paul was one of this ſort before his converſion; but now he drew near to God with his heart. Nothing deſerves the name of prayer unleſs it comes from the heart. It is not *words* that make prayer, it is *deſires*; the felt deſires of the heart made ſenſible of its ſtate and its wants. There are more lies told in our churches and meetings, than at our markets. What ſad hypocriſy is it for a ſet of gay, proud, wanton people to cry—"Lord have mercy upon us; Chriſt have mercy upon us! Incline our hearts to keep theſe laws, &c. &c." while they neither feel the want of mercy, nor wiſh to obey the will of God.

Paul now began to pray in another reſpect. He prayed as a *humble ſinner*; not as a *proud Phariſee*. When our Lord deſigned to expoſe the ſelf-righteous pride of the Phariſees, he repreſented, in a parable, theſe

theſe two ſorts of men going to the temple to pray. And what did they differ in? The one boaſted of his goodneſs; the other, humbled, and almoſt broken hearted, under a ſenſe of his guilt, cries out, "God be merciful to me *a ſinner!* No man prays in God's account, till he prays as a ſinner, for pardoning mercy. It was during theſe three days blindneſs of his body, that the eyes of his underſtanding were opened. It was then that he firſt began to know that the law was *ſpiritual.* "He was without the law before; but now the commandment came, ſin revived, and he died." Jeſus ſaw him in his mournful ſtate, and haſtens to his relief. Go to him, Ananias, and heal this broken-hearted penitent, for under a ſenſe of his ſin, behold, he prayeth.

Paul, we may ſuppoſe, was now acquainted with the Goſpel ſcheme. It was probably revealed to him during theſe three days. And now, he not only owns Jeſus as the true Meſſiah, but knows the gracious purpoſe for which he came. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners.* This is a truth which Paul cordially received. Being well verſed in the law about ſacrifices, he clearly ſaw in them all, that Jeſus Chriſt is the true *Lamb of God that taketh away the ſin of the world.* He ſaw the reaſon of that humiliation of Jeſus and his death on the croſs, that was before a ſtumbling block to him; and now he determines *to know nothing but Chriſt crucified,* and *to glory in nothing but the croſs.* Before this, his dependence was upon his Jewiſh privileges —his birth, his circumciſion, his zeal, his morality; but now all theſe things, which were *gain,* are accounted *loſs,* yea dung and droſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, and an intereſt in him. How differently would ſuch a man pray from what he did before? He now comes to Jeſus, and to the Father, through him, for eternal life.

APPLI-

APPLICATION.

We have now taken a view of converting grace, in the example of the Apoſtle Paul. And let it be obſerved, that converſion is the ſame for ſubſtance, at all times, and in all perſons. Circumſtances may differ; but the work is the ſame. In all caſes it is the wonderful work of God; always undeſerved; and always produces like effects. We are not indeed to expect a viſion or a voice from heaven as in this inſtance, but it is generally wrought by means of the word of Chriſt, ſet home on the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. See here the mighty hand of God! Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Here is grace indeed! free grace, ſovereign grace, rich grace, abundant grace; and all this "for a pattern to them who ſhould hereafter believe." Let none deſpair when ſuch a ſinner as Saul is ſaved. The ſame grace, ſinner, that changed his heart, can change thine; the ſame grace that pardoned his ſins can pardon thine; and it will do ſo too, if, like him, thy proud heart is brought down, and thou art enabled to ſay, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* This was his firſt petition; the dawn of eternal day in his ſoul. O that each of us might but ſay this from his heart! Can you follow me in theſe words? —*Lord, I give myſelf up to thee. I have done wickedly; but would do ſo no more. O, what wouldeſt thou have me to do? Let me be led into a right way for knowing and doing thy will; that I may teſtify my repentance, honour thy name, and obtain the forgiveneſs of my ſins.* When Paul prayed thus, the merciful Saviour directed him to go into the city; and afterwards ſent his ſervant to inſtruct and comfort him. So he will ſay to thee, Ariſe, wait upon God. Read and hear his word: and he ſhall viſit thy ſoul with the light, power, and comfort of his great ſalvation.

As this text affords great encouragement to praying ſouls, and furniſhes them with a plain and pleaſing evidence of their converſion; ſo it marks out

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as distinctly, the woeful state of a prayerless person. Dost thou live without prayer, man, woman, child; —Thou art no Christian. Thou art an Atheist; yea, much worse than an Atheist. He believes no God, and therefore cannot pray to him. You say you believe in God, but never seek him. If you can live without prayer, it is a proof of a blind mind, and of a hard heart; it shews ingratitude to God, and insensibility of want. It proves thou art a stranger to faith, to repentance, to hope, to love, to every Christian grace; for as all these are exercised in true prayer; so, the prayerless person proves he is destitute of them all. What is he then? An enemy to God, and a destroyer of his own soul. "As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between thee and death." "Arise, O sleeper, and call upon thy God." Turn or burn! Pray or perish!"

Go on, praying Christian. "The Lord never said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain." He who said, *Behold, he prayeth,* had observed his first breathings for mercy. He was heard. He was pardoned. He was saved. He is *praising* now. *Behold, he prayeth!* He has been praising Christ for 1700 years, and will do so to all eternity. Who would not pray now, seeing prayer shall be turned into praise, and issue in everlasting songs of joy and triumph?

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SERMON,

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JOHN iii. 16.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

IN these words you have the sum of the whole gospel. Good news for sinners; glad tidings of great joy to all people. They are the words of Jesus Christ, in his admirable discourse with Nicodemus, a teacher and a ruler of the Jews. This man, being convinced by the miracles of Christ, that he was "a teacher come from God," wished to have some conversation with him; but not having yet courage enough to declare for him openly, came to him privately by night. Our Lord directly began with him on the subject of the *new-birth*. "Nicodemus," said he, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" for, observe, the knowledge of the corruption of our nature, and of the necessity of being inwardly changed by grace, is the very first thing we must learn in religion. Nicodemus, with all his learning, was as yet ignorant of this; and so are many of our teachers. But Christ insists upon it, that a man must be born again; and from the doctrine of the new-birth, he passes on to that of faith in Christ, and salvation through faith. This he explains by a remarkable type or emblem of it, well known to the Jews. *As Moses lifted up the serpent*

in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life. Here, Chriſt foretels his death upon the croſs, and the benefit believers would derive from it. As the wounded Jew was healed by looking at the brazen ſerpent; ſo the periſhing ſinner is ſaved by looking at Chriſt crucified. And, that the ſinner may not fear rejection, it is declared in our text, that the ſalvation of all who believe, was the very thing that God deſigned in giving his Son. *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* It is in the free and eternal love of God that our ſalvation begins. "The firſt of God's gifts is his love; the firſt gift of his love is his Son; the firſt gift of his Son is faith; and faith is the root of all other graces, the principle of the new life, and the key which ſhuts up hell, and opens the gate of heaven."

It is *the love of God* we are now to meditate upon. But O, who is equal to the ſubject? "Can we by ſearching find out God; the love of God; God, who is love? Can we find out the love of God to perfection? It is as high as heaven; what can we do? Deeper than hell; what can we know? The meaſure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the ſea. O that the love of God may now be ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit;" that we may "be able to comprehend with all ſaints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge." In order to this, let us conſider the three following things:

I. The LOVE of God—*God ſo loved the world.*

II. The EVIDENCE of it—*that he gave his Son.*

And, III. The END or DESIGN of it, *that whoſoever believeth might be ſaved.*

Firſt, let us conſider *the Love of God.* Conſider *Who* it is that loves, and who are the perſons beloved,

loved. He who loves, is the great God, who was from everlaſting, infinitely happy in himſelf, and who needed not the aid of any creatures. He who made all things out of nothing by the word of his power. He, "with whom the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance? they are before him as nothing, yea, leſs than nothing, and vanity." Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him! But what is more wonderful is, that God, who is infinitely *holy*, and "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," ſhould ever love creatures like us, who are full of ſin. He loved *the world*; this world; not angels, but men; ſinful men of all ages and countries. Not ſinners of the Jews only, as ſome of them fondly dreamed. *Chriſt*, ſaith the apoſtle John, *is the propitiation for our ſins; and not for our's only*, who are Jews, *but for the ſins of the whole world*—for all who ſhall hereafter believe on him, whether Jews or Gentiles, whereſoever they may be ſcattered throughout the whole world.

Nothing is ſo wonderful as the love of God to ſinful man. When man was made at firſt, he was lower than the angels; how much lower is the *ſinner* than the *man!* In ſome reſpects he is lower than the brutes; for "he has the worſt qualities of the brutes without their beſt." Yet, "God hath remembered us in our low eſtate, for his mercy endureth for ever." The love of creatures to one another, is generally founded on ſome real or ſuppoſed goodneſs or excellency, but there was nothing at all in a man to excite the love of God, but on the contrary his hatred and wrath. *The whole world lieth in wickedneſs*, or *in the wicked one*, the devil; under his rule and influence; full of ignorance, carnality, and enmity againſt God; in a ſtate of actual rebellion againſt him, and without the leaſt deſire to know him, ſerve him, or enjoy him. Yet, hear O heavens, and be aſtoniſhed O earth! God loved this world of ſinners. But, how much, no tongue

can tell; no heart conceive! This love is so matchless; so unlike any thing in human affairs, that our text makes no comparison in order to describe it; it has no parallel or similitude among men; and, therefore, it is only said, "God *so* loved the world, that he gave us his Son." In most cases human love is expressed by better words than deeds; but the love of God is such, that it cannot be expressed at all by words; words are too weak; it is by actions, that God commends his love towards us, and above all by this one—the gift of his Son: and this is the *second* thing proposed—

II. The EVIDENCE of God's love; *he gave us his only begotten Son.* Many are the gracious gifts of God to this world of sinners: The powers of our minds and bodies, the food we eat, the garments we wear, the health we enjoy; ten thousand thousand precious gifts call loudly upon us for daily praises. But great as these are, they are all lost in this one, like a drop of water in the sea. St. John speaking of it, says, "*Herein* is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son;" as if he said, this is love indeed; compared with this nothing else deserves the name; and without it, what would all other gifts have proved? what *do* they prove to wicked men, who live and die "without Christ?" This is that gift of God, promised to our first parents in the garden; and which Abraham, David, Isaiah, all the patriarchs, and all the prophets, looked and longed for. This was "THE MERCY promised to the fathers," (Luke i. 72.) This is *the mercy* that never could have been expected, never desired. It would never have entered into the heart of men or angels to have thought of such a thing, as that God should give us his Son. And certainly it never could have been *deserved.* Man deserves nothing but hell. The common blessings of life are all forfeited by sin: and therefore we properly call our food, raiment, and health, *mercies*, for so they are; but when we consider the greatness of that

that gift, they diſappear like the brighteſt ſtars when the ſun ariſes. It will be a matter of aſtoniſhment to all eternity that God ſhould ſo love the world as to give us his Son.

The greatneſs of this love appears in the greatneſs of the gift; in the glory and excellency of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is here called *his only begotten Son*. The angels are ſons of God by *creation*; and believers are ſons of God by *adoption*; but Jeſus Chriſt is the only *begotten* Son of God. This is a name that we cannot fully explain; but it certainly ſignifies, that Jeſus partakes of the ſame divine nature with his Father. "That holy thing which was born of the Virgin, was called the Son of God." Becauſe we, when he came to ſave, "were partakers of fleſh and blood, he likewiſe partook of the ſame nature." He was truly man, "fleſh of our fleſh, and bone of our bone." But he was alſo as truly God. God and Man in one Perſon. "In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." "He is the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his Perſon." "The WORD, who was made fleſh and dwelt among us, was with God, and was God." And, indeed, this is "the great myſtery of godlineſs, that God was manifeſted in the fleſh." "Emmanuel—God with us." "The LORD our righteouſneſs." And although the Son of God veiled his glory when on earth, and "made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him ſelf the form of a ſervant," yet his true followers "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." "His birth, though humble, was celebrated by a multitude of the heavenly hoſt: he had a poor lodging, but a ſtar lighted viſitants to it from a far country. He had not ſuch attendants as other kings have, but he was attended with far better—crowds of patients getting health of body and ſoul. He made the dumb to ſing his praiſes, and the lame to leap for joy; the deaf to hear his wonders, and

the blind to ſee his glory. And though he ſubmitted to the ſhameful death of the croſs, heaven and earth became mourners on the occaſion; the ſun was clad in black, and if *men* were unmoved, the earth trembled; there were few to rend their garments, but the rocks were not ſo inſenſible; they rent their bowels. Death and the grave ſubmitted to his power; the king of terrors loſt his ſting, and the Prince of Life triumphed over him." This is the great and glorious perſon whom the Father freely gave from his boſom, "God's own Son;" "God's dear Son;" "God's well beloved Son;" and ſurely this was the greateſt poſſible proof of his love. When God tried Abraham, he ſaid to him, "Take now thy *ſon*, thine *only* ſon, Iſaac, whom thou *loveſt*, and offer him up for a *burnt-offering*." Was ever command ſo difficult, ſo trying? Every word is like a dagger to a parent's heart; but he obeys. He conſults not with fleſh and blood. He takes his ſon to the mountain; the altar is built; the wood laid in order; the youth is bound; the fatal knife uplifted: but it is enough. The deſign is anſwered. Abraham's faith is proved, even "the faith that works by *love*." "Now I know," ſaid the Lord, that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy *ſon*, thine *only* ſon from me." And may we not ſay, Now *we* know and are ſure; we cannot admit a doubt of it; that God loves ſinful man; ſeeing he withheld not his Son, his only begotten Son from us; "he ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Verily, *God is love!*

Abraham's was a rare inſtance. What he did was at God's command; and it was done in faith, that God would raiſe him again from the dead rather than the promiſe ſhould fail. But what would induce a fond parent to part with a child, even for the ſake of a friend, much leſs of an enemy? Hiſtory tells, that during a dreadful famine in Germany, a poor family, conſiſting of a man, his wife,

and

and four children, were reduced to the laſt extremity, and on the very point of being ſtarved to death. Knowing no other method of relief, the huſband propoſed, that one of the children ſhould be ſold, that ſo they might procure bread for themſelves and the reſt. To this painful propoſal the wife at laſt reluctantly conſents. It was now neceſſary to conſider *which* of the four ſhould be ſold. The eldeſt was firſt mentioned; but neither of the parents could think of that; the dear child was their firſt-born; they could not poſſibly part with him. The ſecond child was then produced; but the poor mother objected. The fine boy was the very picture of his father; ſhe could not ſpare him. The third, a charming girl, came next in turn; but the father made a ſimilar objection; the dear child bore ſo ſtrong a reſemblance of her mother; ſhe muſt not go. Well, one only remained. The youngeſt appears. But here both at once unite to ſay, we cannot part with him; this is our Benjamin, the darling child of our old age. No, we will rather periſh altogether, than part with any one of our dear children. Let this little ſtory illuſtrate, in ſome feeble degree, the wondrous love of God. God *ſo* loved the world, that he gave his *only* begotten Son, his dearly beloved Son, to be our Saviour.

The greatneſs of this gift will ſtill farther appear if we conſider *to what*, and *for what*, he was given. If he had taken our nature in its higheſt and beſt form; if he had become a prince or an emperor, it had been much. But how much more was it for him to come into our world in the loweſt circumſtances; to be born in a ſtable, to be laid in a manger; to be perſecuted almoſt as ſoon as born; to be a poor man; ſo poor that he had not a place where to lay his head; to be a deſpiſed man, "a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people;" to be a "a man of ſorrows; and eſpecially "*to bear the contradictions of ſinners againſt himſelf.*"

It

It is a great hardſhip for a good man to be forced to be for a few hours in bad company. A man who fears God can hardly endure to travel or ſit a few hours with profane, lewd, or drunken people. But Chriſt ſpent above thirty years in this wicked world. Good men "ſigh and cry for the abominations they behold;" "rivers of tears run down their eyes becauſe men keep not God's laws." How then muſt the holy heart of Jeſus Chriſt have been grieved with the wicked actions and words of men, and with their *wicked thoughts*, all which were preſent to his mind continually.

But God's giving his Son includes ſtill more. It includes giving him up into the hands of divine Juſtice, and into the hands of wicked men, as the executioners thereof. "He that ſpared not his own Son, *delivered him up* for us all." So St. Peter ſpake of him, *Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* The text ſhews for what purpoſe he was thus given up. It was that believers *might not periſh*. They deſerve to periſh. They had broken the law; they had incurred the curſe; and muſt have periſhed, if no ſatisfaction had been made to the Juſtice of God. But, Behold *the Lamb of God*; provided, appointed, given of God. "God ſent his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin, condemned ſin in the fleſh." "He was made *ſin* for us, though he knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him." O Chriſtian, ſee the Son of God in his agony in the garden, ſweating great drops of blood. See him ſtanding as a criminal at Pilate's bar, falſely accuſed and baſely treated. See him hanging on the accurſed tree; his hands and feet nailed to the croſs; derided by the cruel inſulting mob, and deſerted by his heavenly Father. And ſay now—God *ſo* loved the world, but, *how much*, thou canſt not ſay. The depth of Chriſt's ſufferings, and the height of glory to which they raiſe thee, expreſs this love in ſtronger terms than language knows.

There

There is yet another way, in which God gives his Son—in the preaching of the Goſpel, and in the application of Chriſt to the believer's heart. As the brazen ſerpent was expoſed to view in the camp of Iſrael, ſo is Chriſt ſet before periſhing ſinners in the Goſpel. Herein God "*ſets forth* his Son"—and "declares his righteouſneſs"—"brings near his righteouſneſs"—"reveals his righteouſneſs," that it may be received by faith, and become ours by believing. *My father*, ſaith Chriſt, *giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world*, John vi. 32. It is ſet before all men who hear the Goſpel; but it is the food only of thoſe, who only by faith receive it; and this leads us to the laſt thing propoſed, which is,

III. The END or DESIGN of this gift of love—*that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life.*

The ſalvation of believing ſinners, was the object which God had in view when he gave his Son. Suppoſing God would ſend his Son into the world, for what purpoſe might ſinners have expected him? Might they not juſtly fear it would be to puniſh them for their ſins? So it ſeems intimated in the next verſe, *For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be ſaved.* The whole conduct of our Saviour upon earth agreed with this gracious deſign. He came not to deſtroy men's lives but to ſave them. He came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt. Every thing he did, and every thing he ſaid, had this tendency.

This gracious deſign is expreſſed two ways; the firſt is, *That they might not periſh.* To *periſh* is for a man to die in his ſins, under the curſe of the law, under the wrath of God, and to be for ever miſerable in hell. This is the proper wages of ſin, the real deſert of every ſinner; and we muſt know this to be our deſert, before we can look to Jeſus for

ſalva-

ſalvation. Our Lord, in this paſſage, alludes to the brazen ſerpent in the wilderneſs. Now, for whom was this erected? Was it an object of curioſity to be gazed at by a vain multitude? No; it was for the cure of the wounded Jews, who had been ſtung by the fiery ſerpents; whoſe blood had been poiſoned by their venom, and who were ready to expire in agony. Theſe men, being ready to periſh, would gladly comply with the Divine command. How eaſy, how cheap, how pleaſant a method of relief! *Look* and *live*, was the heavenly mandate. Juſt ſo it is in the Goſpel of Chriſt. *Look unto me*, ſaith Chriſt, *and ye ſhall be ſaved.* If we receive the Goſpel as the teſtimony of God, we ſhall turn our eyes to no other method of relief but this. We ſhall renounce all notions of merit and works, we ſhall receive Jeſus, and reſt upon him alone for ſalvation.

But this is not all. Salvation includes the poſſeſſion of eternal life, as well as deliverance from death. "I am come that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly," ſaid Chriſt. This includes the life of grace, and the life of glory. Believers now live; they live to God; they live ſpiritually; they live by faith in the Son of God. Before converſion they were "dead while they lived." Now they live indeed. Chriſt by his Spirit lives in them, and they live in him. Chriſt is now their life, and when he ſhall appear the ſecond time, they ſhall alſo appear with him in glory. Grace is glory in the bud. He that believeth hath everlaſting life, Ver. 36: he has not only a title to it, but he has the *beginning*, *ſecurity*, *pledge*, *earneſt*, and *foretaſte* of it, which ſhall certainly iſſue in the full, compleat, and everlaſting enjoyment of it in heaven.

But there is a word of encouragement in our text which we muſt by no means forget, WHOSOEVER: God gave his Son, *that whoſoever believeth in him might not periſh, &c.* Perſons of every character; high

high and low, rich and poor, young and old; ſinners of every degree, the greateſt, vileſt, and moſt abominable. Not only, may the more *moral man*, who is alſo a ſinner, look to Jeſus and be ſaved; but that unhappy creature, a man or woman, who has gone to uncommon lengths in ſin, who thinks there is not ſuch another ſinner out of hell, and who is even tempted to deſpair of mercy, perhaps tempted to ſelf-murder on account of his peculiar and terrible guilt—*Whoſoever*—obſerve the word, *whoſoever believeth*; here is a warrant for the vileſt ſinner upon earth to look to Jeſus, to come to Jeſus, to believe in Jeſus; and the truth of God is pledged for it, that he ſhall not be caſt out. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, John vi. 37.

APPLICATION.

We have heard *great things* to-day. "The angels deſire to look into theſe things." All the millions of the redeemed in glory are now looking into theſe things. And if we get to heaven, the love of God, the gift of his love, and the effect of this gift, will employ our raviſhed ſouls to all eternity. But ſay, my friends, how do they affect you? Or, are you totally unaffected by them? Does not this vain and wicked world engroſs your hearts, while the love of God and the gifts of Chriſt are quite forgotten?

But, ſtop a moment, and conſider. What are you doing? You are committing the greateſt ſin in the world. Unbelief is a damning ſin; *he that believeth not is condemned already*; and *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds are evil*, ſo our Lord declares in this chapter. As the gift of Chriſt is the greateſt proof that God could give of his love to the world, ſo, depend upon it, he will reſent the contempt of it as the greateſt crime. It is a crime greater than the devils in hell ever committed. They never had a Saviour to deſpiſe and reject.

reject. O beware of the fatal consequences! Death is approaching, and you must appear before Christ. But how will you face him, when you know you neglected him all your days? O, what would sinners give in the great day for an interest in Christ! Worlds! worlds! millions of worlds! would be counted cheap, could they purchase an interest in him. Well, sinner, as yet there is hope. Though you have neglected long, it is not too late yet. Turn now, even now, thy weeping eyes to the cross of Jesus. Behold God's dear Son, and the sinner's dear Saviour, with extended arms open to embrace thee. Hear him crying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O, let your heart reply, "Behold I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God."

And, O believer, humble believer in Jesus, what thinkest *thou* of Christ? Is he not precious to thee, the pearl of great price, the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely? What praise and love are due from thee to the Father, who gave his Son; to the Son, who gave himself; and to the Holy Spirit, who led thee to know and believe in him! Thou canst heartily say with St. Paul, *Thanks be to God for his* UNSPEAKABLE GIFT! This wonderful love of God in the gift of his Son, convinces us, in the most striking manner, of the immense value of the soul, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, seeing that a sinful soul could not be redeemed but at such a vast expence. What encouragement is here to him, who sees his sin *infinite*, that the blood of Christ, the blood of God, is of *infinite value* and efficacy! And what encouragement is here for the believer, who has received this greatest of gifts, that God will not withhold lesser gifts; for *he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, freely give us all things.* Yes, "all is ours," if Christ is ours. *He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

Blessed be God, for Jesus Christ. Amen.

5 DE60

A SERMON, ON EXODUS XX. 8.

Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.

THIS is the commandment of the great God. It is one of "*the ten words*," ſpoken with divine majeſty on Mount Sinai, and alſo written by the finger of God in tables of ſtone. There is no commandment of the ten, of greater conſequence than this; yet ſcarcely any one is ſo much diſregarded. Well, therefore, may it begin with the word—*Remember*; ſeeing that thoughtleſs mortals are ſo prone to forget it.

We are by no means to ſuppoſe that this law was given to the *Jews* only. It is not of a *ceremonial* nature, but *moral*; as all the ten are. The Sabbath was not firſt inſtituted when the law was given to Moſes: It was only renewed. We read of the Sabbath in the ſecond chapter of Geneſis. It began as ſoon as the world began; *for on the ſeventh day God ended his work which he had made; and God bleſſed the ſeventh day, and ſanctified it.* There can be no doubt that Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all the good men of old, obſerved the Sabbath; but when the deſcendants of Abraham became ſlaves in Egypt, it is probable that they could not obſerve it as they ought: but now, being delivered from bondage, the law was revived, and they are commanded to *remember* the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.

This law, then, is of perpetual obligation. And if God ſaw it needful for Adam to keep it even in Paradiſe, and before he ſinned, how much more ne-

neceſſary is it for us to keep it. He had no hard work to do, from which he required reſt; his heart was full of the love of God, and every day was like a Sabbath: but as for us, the labours of our bodies, and the cares of our minds are ſuch, as to make a weekly reſt abſolutely neceſſary. Beſides, we are ſo full of ſin, ſo ſurrounded by temptation, and ſo apt to forget God and our ſouls, that we greatly need a weekly Sabbath to call away our affections from the world, and direct them to things above.

It is true that we do not keep the ſelf-ſame day as the Jews did. They kept the *ſeventh* day of the week, but we, the *firſt*. But the morality of the Sabbath does not conſiſt in its being the *ſeventh day* of the week, but in its being the *ſeventh part* of our time. Beſides, we have the ſame authority for keeping the *firſt* day, as they had for keeping the *ſeventh*; for Jeſus Chriſt is "*Lord of the Sabbath*;" and his apoſtles, who acted by his direction, and under the influence of his Spirit, conſtantly met for divine worſhip on the firſt day of the week, which was called *The Lord's Day*, Acts xx. 7. Rev. i. 10. This was kept becauſe it was the day of his reſurrection; and as the Sabbath was firſt of all kept becauſe the work of creation was finiſhed; and renewed when God had finiſhed the great work of redeeming his people from bondage; ſo the Chriſtian Sabbath is kept on the day when the Lord aroſe from the dead, having finiſhed the greater work of redeeming ſouls from ſin, and death, and hell. There is alſo great reaſon to think that the creation Sabbath was changed when the Jews came out of Egypt, ſo that they kept their firſt Sabbath in the wilderneſs on the ſixth day of the week, accounting it the ſeventh from their coming out of Egypt; and that this continued to be the Jewiſh Sabbath, typical, as all their ordinances were, and that upon the reſurrection of Chriſt the Sabbath reverted to its original ſeventh day. Many learned men have been of this opinion, and, if they have not fully proved it, they have made it very probable.

bable. And this opinion ſeems to be countenanced by what St. Paul ſays in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, ch. iv. where, ſpeaking of the Jews, he ſays, "they entered not into the promiſed reſt on account of their unbelief;" and that David, long after, ſpeaks of "another *reſt*," and of "*another day*," or reaſon, in which it might be ſought; he concludes that *there remaineth a reſt*, or *ſabbatiſm, for the people of God*; that is, a *New Teſtament Sabbath*, a Chriſtian Sabbath, in which believers reſt in the finiſhed work of Chriſt, and enjoy a foretaſte of the heavenly reſt.

The word *Remember* ſeems to intimate the neceſſity of preparing for it. We ſhould remember on the Saturday, that the Lord's Day is at hand. People in trade prepare for the *market-day*; and why ſhould not Chriſtians get ready for the Sabbath, which is the market-day for their ſouls. It is a great ſin that wages are paid, proviſions bought, houſes cleaned, perhaps linen waſhed, on the Sunday morning. By theſe, and other worldly employments, the beſt part of the day is loſt, and perhaps only ſome of the laſt hours of it, if any at all, are devoted to God. We muſt *Remember* the Sabbath Day, and ſo prepare for it, as to be ready for the ſervice of God, and devote the whole of the day to it.

In the further conſideration of this text we ſhall,

I. Shew *how* the Sabbath is to be kept holy; and,

II. Give ſome reaſons *why* it ſhould be kept holy.

In keeping the Sabbath holy we are to conſider, what *ought not* to be done, and what *ought* to be done.

What *ought not* to be done is expreſſed in theſe words, *Thou ſhalt not do any work—thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, thy man ſervant, nor thy maid ſervant, nor thy cattle, nor the ſtranger that is within thy gates.* Six days are allowed for labour, but the ſeventh is a day of reſt. Our worldly buſineſs, whatever it be, muſt be laid aſide. The *whole* family, as well as the maſter of it, muſt ceaſe from

worldly employments; and this commandment is directed particularly to maſters of families, who are to take care that all perſons under their roof keep the Sabbath.

We cannot ſuppoſe that only *work*, or manual labor, or trade, is here forbidden. Every thing is forbidden that is inconſiſtent with the deſign of the day; which is, to ſerve God, and edify our ſouls. Travelling, walking, or riding, for mere pleaſure, trifling viſits, paying or receiving wages, frequenting public houſes, writing letters, ſettling accounts, reading books on ordinary ſubjects, yea, converſation of a worldly kind, are here forbidden. Many who will not *work* on the Lord's Day, will *play*, and take their pleaſure: But this is worſe than working. St. Auſtin, long ago, obſerved, that "it is better to *plow* on the Sabbath than to *dance*."

The Sabbath is as much profaned by *idleneſs* as by buſineſs. Mere reſt of body is the Sabbath of a beaſt, not of a man. We have immortal ſouls, and this the day in which their eternal welfare is to be ſought. We have the authority of God for theſe aſſertions, Iſa. lviii. 13. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath*—from trampling upon it, or from travelling on it, or from walking at large, as if under no reſtraint—*from doing thy pleaſure on my holy day*, that is, from carnal pleaſure—doing that which is agreeable to thy corrupt inclinations; *and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable*, eſteeming it above all other days, taking holy pleaſure in the ways of God; *and ſhalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleaſure, nor ſpeaking thine own words*; not gratifying the fleſh, nor indulging in trifling and impertinent converſation; *then*, ſaith the Lord, *thou ſhalt delight thyſelf in the Lord, &c.*—thou ſhalt have the honor, profit, and pleaſure of it; for God hath bleſſed this day.

But ſome will ſay—What, is nothing at all to be done

done on the Sabbath? I anſwer, *Works of* NECESSITY *and* MERCY *are allowed*; they were ſo by the Jewiſh law. Our Saviour healed the ſick on that day, and reproved the Phariſees for their ſeverity and rigor in their obſervance of it; ſhewing, that if it was lawful to feed or water a beaſt, it was certainly lawful to do good to men on that day; obſerving alſo, that *the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*;—it was made for the good of man, both in body and ſoul; and therefore he is not to be prevented from that which is neceſſary to his comfortable ſupport. Doubtleſs, the getting of food, clothing ourſelves decently, viſiting the ſick, beſtowing alms, taking care of children, and many other things, are lawful on the Sabbath. But great care muſt be taken that this indulgence is not carried too far. That cannot be accounted a work of neceſſity or mercy which may be done on *Saturday*, or deferred till *Monday*. Many abuſe the Sabbath by *journeys* to ſee their relations and friends, which might be done on other days. Others *begin* or *finiſh* journeys on that day, to ſave their own time on the week-days. *Marriages* and *Funerals* are often celebrated on the Lord's Day, which might as well be on another day; for hereby many perſons are hindered from the proper duties of the Sabbath. Far the greater part of *Viſits* made on this day are unlawful, as they occupy the time that ought to be ſpent either in public or private worſhip, and divert the mind from religious thoughts. Many vainly attempt to ſanctify their journies and viſits by going to a place of worſhip, though they ſpend moſt of the day in travelling, feaſting, or idle converſation; but this is, in many caſes, only a refined hypocriſy. Nor is it much better for perſons to wander miles from home to hear different preachers, if they can hear the true Goſpel at home. Even the beaſts are not to be employed *unneceſſarily*, though they may doubtleſs be uſed, if they are conſcientiouſly

employed to contribute to our ſerving God the better. *Feaſting* our friends on the Lord's Day is a grievous ſin, as it employs too much time and care, and tends to make perſons leſs fit for devotion. It is alſo very blameable to take up much time in *dreſs*, and, ſtill more ſo, to employ others in it. How ſad a reflection is it, that 10,000 hair dreſſers are perhaps employed every Sunday! Not to mention the vaſt number of coachmen, chaiſe-drivers, hoſtlers, publicans, and ſervants of all deſcriptions; thouſands of whom are conſtantly debarred from the means of grace, and live and die—like Heathens.

There are alſo very many who deceive themſelves by attempting to compound matters with the bleſſed God; they will give him, *formally*, an hour or two of the day, and employ all the reſt in a worldly manner. Where do we read in Scripture of *Canonical hours*, or find a diſtinction between *church hours* and others? Does not the text ſay, *Remember the Sabbath* DAY, *to keep it holy?* And by what arguments can it be proved that a Sabbath Day is ſhorter than another? Do other days conſiſt of 12 or 24 hours, and this of 4, or 3, or 2? If you employ a labourer, and pay him for a day, will you be ſatisfied if he goes to work at 11 in the morning and leaves off at 1, and does no more all the day? Is not this the true cauſe of a man's being ſatisfied with ſerving God ſo ſhort a time, that he diſlikes the ſervice? And is not that an evidence of his being in a carnal ſtate, and under the wrath of God? Let conſcience anſwer it.

But this commandment not only forbids worldly employments on the Sabbath, it requires that the whole day be ſpent in a religious manner, eſpecially in *the public or private exerciſes of God's worſhip*.

We ſhould begin the day with *private prayer*. This is neceſſary to prepare our minds for public worſhip. We ought to *riſe early*, in order that ourſelves and families may be in time at the houſe of God. *Early*, ſaid the Pſalmiſt, *will I ſeek thee*. Thoſe who

who are alive to God, would be ashamed of rising later on a Sabbath than on another day. Surely the care of our souls demands as early attention as the affairs of the body. The *whole* family, if possible, should attend the *morning* service. In some cases perhaps, this cannot be: but the mere preparation of a hot dinner, is a poor excuse for detaining even one servant at home. Those who fear God need not be told, that *family* as well as private *prayer*, should be offered up before we go to the public worship.

PUBLIC WORSHIP is most evidently an ordinance of God, of the greatest possible importance. From the beginning of the world, the true worshippers of God have assembled together on his day, for prayer, praise, and instruction. They were always "glad, when invited to go up to the house of the Lord." They accounted "a day in his courts better than a thousand." Our Saviour countenanced public worship by his own presence and example. "The zeal of his Father's house ate him up." He has commanded his Gospel to be "preached to all the world;" and has promised, that "wherever two or three gather together in his name, he will be with them."

To assemble ourselves with our fellow Christians on the Lord's Day, is, therefore, the bounden duty of all; unless they mean to relinquish Christianity. And yet, it is deplorable to consider, that, perhaps, *three-fourths* of the People of England totally desert the house of God. We justly lament the avowed infidelity of a neighbouring country; but what shall we say of Britons, who call themselves Christians, and yet never profess their faith by public acts of homage to their God and Saviour? We know what excuses are made both by rich and poor; but we know also, that these excuses will not be admitted by the great Judge of quick and dead. Some will say, "We need not go to church, for we know as much as the minister can teach us." If so,

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you are either very wiſe, or he is very ignorant. If you are ſo wiſe, much may be expected from you; but it is no part of your wiſdom, to neglect one of the main branches of your duty, in which you ought to ſeek the glory of God, the welfare of your ſoul, and the good of your neighbour. Jeſus Chriſt has appointed that his miniſters ſhould preach his Goſpel; and if it is their duty to *preach*, it is certainly the people's duty to *hear*: and if *you* may chuſe to abſent yourſelf, why may not another? why may not all? What then becomes of Chriſt's ordinance? or, where is your obedience to him as king in Zion? O remember what he has ſaid concerning this very thing, Luke x. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Yes, Sirs, whatever pretences may be made, the perſon who habitually neglects the worſhip of God in public, will be held guilty of deſpiſing Chriſt.

But it is not enough merely to attend. We ſhould go with a ſerious mind, deſirous of humbling ourſelves before God for our ſins, in the confeſſion of the church; earneſtly ſeeking pardon and grace in the petitions offered up; and cheerfully joining the praiſes and thankſgivings. Our attendance at a place of worſhip ſhould not be to ſee and be ſeen; to be obſerved by others, and to make our obſervations on them; as appears often to be the caſe by the converſation of perſons when the ſervice is over. Neither ſhould we ſit as critics and judges of the miniſter, merely to praiſe or blame; for it is plain, that many either know nothing at all of the ſermon when they come away, or only pronounce it a good or bad one. Our buſineſs is to ſeek the teaching of Chriſt by his Spirit, through the miniſter. *Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth!* ſhould be the language of every ſoul.

There are ſome who excuſe themſelves from public worſhip on account of their *mean cloathing*. But is a man ſo poor that he cannot get better? ſtill let him wait upon God. "Godlineſs hath the promiſe

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of this life, as well as of that to come." Had the poor man ſerved God better, perhaps he had not been ſo poor; certainly this is true, if idleneſs and extravagance occaſioned his poverty. But, it may be, it is the hand of God which has brought him ſo low; his poverty is not his fault, but his affliction. Still let him ſeek and ſerve the Lord; wait upon God, who knows what things thou haſt need of, and knows how to ſupply all thy wants. Yea, it is probable, that ſome of thy fellow worſhippers will pity thy caſe, and aſſiſt thee in getting employment or raiment. And as to the contempt of the proud, fear it not. Good men will pity thee. They muſt be bad indeed who will deſpiſe thee; regard them not.

There are others who excuſe themſelves from public worſhip by ſaying—"We do not ſee that people who attend are better than others. We are as good as they." What have you to do with others? To their own maſter they ſtand or fall. Perhaps they would do worſe if they did not ſo; perhaps you would do better if you did. If they *abuſe* the means of grace, will that excuſe your *neglecting* them? But your buſineſs is with yourſelves. Worſhip God.

But the worſhip of God in *public* is not the whole duty of the Sabbath; *reading the Scriptures* at home is equally a neceſſary part of it. Indeed they ought to be read daily; but as moſt perſons have more time on the Lord's Day, they ſhould then be particularly ſtudied. *Meditation*, or fixed, affectionate thinking upon the things of God, with *examination* of our heart and ways, is another branch of duty. Thoſe who have families, ſhould take care that they all improve the day, both in public and private. The neglect of this is the ſad cauſe of ſo much Sabbath-breaking. But heads of families may tremble to think, that they partake of the ſins of children and ſervants, if they do not endeavour to reſtrain them. Parents ſhould *catechiſe* their children; and

enquire

enquire what they remember and underſtand of the *ſermons* they hear. Above all, earneſt *prayer* ſhould be offered up, and with the whole family; and that, not only on the Sabbath evening, but on the morning alſo; and, indeed, on the morning and evening of every day in the week.

II. Let us briefly conſider the reaſons *why* we ſhould ſanctify the Sabbath.

The authority of God is of itſelf a ſufficient reaſon. God commands; let man obey. It is at his peril if he refuſes. Surely we owe this obedience to him who made us, and in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." We are indebted to him for every breath we draw; and is it too much for us, in return for all his kindneſs, to ſeparate one day in ſeven to his bleſſed ſervice, that we may know him, love him, pleaſe him, and glorify him? Surely this is "our *reaſonable* ſervice."

The goodneſs of God calls us to it. If God had not appointed a Sabbath, ſome cruel maſters would have allowed their ſervants no reſt from their toil; yea, covetous men would perhaps have deſtroyed themſelves by their labour. But, by the goodneſs of God in this merciful appointment, the wearied body of the labourer is refreſhed, and in the cheerful ſervice of his God his mind is enlivened; and thus is he fitted for the duties of another week; while his immortal ſoul is prepared by divine grace for a happier world hereafter.

The example of God is another argument. *In ſix days the Lord made heaven and earth, and reſted the ſeventh day.* The whole work of creation was finiſhed in ſix days; after which nothing new was made. God then reſted, "not as one weary, but as one well pleaſed with the inſtances of his own goodneſs, and the manifeſtations of his own glory;" and this he did as an example to man. The patriarchs reſted in the contemplation of God's works of creation. The Jews reſted in the thankful remembrance of their redemption from Egypt. And Chriſtian

tian believers now reſt in the finiſhed work of Chriſt's redeeming love.

God's bleſſing this day is another reaſon why we ſhould keep it holy. The Sabbath is a bleſſed day, for God hath bleſſed it. He expects us to bleſs him on it, and we may expect him to bleſs us. He does bleſs it. From the beginning of the world until now, his people have found it good for them to wait upon God. His ſervice is perfect freedom. His ways are full of pleaſure. "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice therein."

APPLICATION.

How awefully is the day of God profaned! It is a great ſin. It is a national ſin; for though the laws of England require us to obey this law of God, yet it is deſpiſed by all ſorts of people. The great and rich ſet the example. They generally travel on the Lord's Day. Others of them have feaſts, and ſome, muſic and card parties; while others ride abroad to ſhew their fine horſes and carriages. Tradeſmen, caſting off all regard to religion, form parties of pleaſure, and reſort to the country for carnal amuſement. Inferior perſons ſpend the day in idleneſs, drinking, and lewdneſs. Thus, all ſorts of people conſpire to caſt contempt on the authority of God, to ruin their own ſouls, and bring down judgements on a wicked land. In ſome parts of this kingdom, the Sabbath ſeems almoſt forgotten; and though the church bell rings, and the ſhops are ſhut, yet people buy and ſell, drink and ſwear, proclaiming to all men, that the fear of God is not before their eyes. Magiſtrates and churchwardens take little or no care to prevent theſe evils, and ſo become partakers of other men's ſins.

But ſtop and conſider, What will be the end of theſe things? Will not God require it? He certainly will. Yea, he often ſhews his anger now againſt Sabbath-breaking. It is dreadful to conſider, how many perſons are drowned, or otherwiſe deſtroyed, while committing this ſin. There are

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ten times more accidents of this kind on the Lord's Day than on other days. Sabbath breaking is the inlet of all other evils, and the certain road to ruin. Habits of vice, contracted by evil company on this day, are often their own punishment in this world. The drunkard beggars his family, and destroys his constitution; and the thief commonly ends his days at the gallows. How many dying malefactors have warned others to avoid this sin, confessing that it was by breaking the Sabbath they were brought to such a dreadful end. O, Sirs, if you have the reason of men, if you have any fear of God, if you have any regard for your family or country, if you have any love to your precious souls—*Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.*

And O, be thankful for this privilege, you who enjoy it. Blessed be God, the Sabbath is not abolished in England, as it is in France. May God ever preserve to us the blessing of a Christian Sabbath, and enable us to employ it diligently. Let it be remembered, that "bodily service profiteth little;" God says, "My son, give me thine heart." Let him be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Attendance on the means of grace will answer little purpose, unless we are brought by the influence of his Holy Spirit, to know and feel our lost and ruined state as sinners, and are led to know Christ as revealed in the Gospel, and to believe on him to the saving of our souls. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Let us therefore "take heed *what we hear*," that it is the Gospel of the free grace of God, and not a system of mere morality; which never converted a soul yet, nor ever will: and "let us take heed *how we hear*," that it be seriously, and with a desire "to be taught of God." Let us "mix faith with the word, that it may profit our souls." Let us lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives. Thus shall our Sabbaths on earth, prepare our souls for the perfect knowledge, love, likeness, and enjoyment of God our Saviour, in the realms of everlasting happiness above. To which, may God, of his infinite mercy in Christ, bring us all! Amen and Amen!

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SERMON,

ON

1 COR. iii. 11.

For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.

A FOUNDATION is that part of a building which is firſt laid, and upon which all the reſt ſtands: if the foundation of a building is bad, or gives way, the whole edifice is in danger: it is therefore of great importance that it be ſolid and durable. Now, the Scriptures often compare ſpiritual things with natural things; and the church of God is here compared to a *houſe* or *temple*, "an habitation of God through the Spirit," or, as it is expreſſed, Verſe 9, *Ye are God's building*. Of this building, Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation. The whole church of God, in all ages and in all places, reſts intirely upon him. He is, to every true member of it, what a foundation is to a building, he bears all the weight of it.

The occaſion of theſe words was this. There had been diviſions among the Chriſtians at Corinth. They admired one preacher and deſpiſed another. One party was for Paul, another for Apollos. St. Paul reproves them for it; and ſhews them that all their miniſters were but like workmen employed in the ſame building. Paul, who taught them the firſt principles of Religion, laid the foundation. Apollos and other preachers who followed him, built them up, or took further pains for their inſtruction. But, as to the foundation, it was already laid; and no

teacher, taught of God and ſent by him, would direct the people to any other way of ſalvation than through faith in Chriſt. For, ſaith he, *Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* The great truth contained in theſe words is often mentioned in the Scriptures. When St. Peter was brought before the Jewiſh rulers for preaching Chriſt, he told them boldly, that "He was the STONE which they had ſet at nought," and added—*Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.* In like manner, St. Paul, ſhowing that God alone muſt have the glory of our ſalvation, ſays, that *Chriſt Jeſus is made unto us Wiſdom — and Righteouſneſs — and Sanctification — and Redemption*—that is—"*Wiſdom* to enlighten our ignorant minds—*Righteouſneſs* to juſtify our guilty perſons—*Sanctification* to renew our depraved natures—and *Redemption*, to complete the whole, in the reſurrection of our bodies." Or, as more briefly expreſſed in another place, *Chriſt is all, and in all.*

There are four reſpects in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be our foundation.

I. He is the foundation of all *ſaving knowledge.*

II. He is the foundation of *our acceptance with God.*

III. He is the foundation of all *holy obedience*; and,

IV. He is the foundation of all *true happineſs*, here and hereafter *.

I. Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all *ſaving knowledge*—I mean of that knowledge which is neceſſary to ſalvation; for it is eternal life truly to know God the Father and Chriſt the Saviour. Chriſt came to ſave us from our ignorance as well as from our ſins. All men, as born into the world, are in a ſtate of complete darkneſs and blindneſs as to the things of God. Reaſon, or the light of nature, as it

* The plan, with ſome other parts of this ſermon, are borrowed from Two Diſcourſes on the ſame text, preached by the late Rev. W. Romaine, before the Univerſity of Oxford.

is called, leads no man to Chriſt. The wiſeſt heathens were *vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened*, Rom. i. Nor is this the caſe of the heathen only, *the natural man*, that is, every man by nature, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God—they are fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. And what is worſe, the natural man hateth the light. As the thief and the adulterer dread the morning, ſo every ſinner, being under the power of the prince of darkneſs, *hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, leſt his evil deeds ſhould be reproved*, John iii. 20. He ſhuns the light of God's word, leſt he ſhould ſee himſelf, and be filled with ſhame and painful conviction by the diſcovery of his ſin. Now it was one principal end of Chriſt's coming from heaven to be the light of the world. He preached recovery of ſight to the blind. He opened the bodily eyes of ſome who were born blind, to ſhow that he could alſo open the eyes of the mind. He is to the ſoul of every believer, what the ſun is to our bodily eyes. One great deſign of the Goſpel is *to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light*. Not that the word alone is ſufficient for this purpoſe, unleſs accompanied by the power of the Spirit of God; HE *only who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, can ſhine into our minds*, ſo as to give us the true light.

Here let us ſtop a moment and enquire, what do *we* know of this? Is it ſo, that all men are born blind? Have we been ſenſible of this? We ſhould think it a miſerable thing to ſit for ſeveral days, as the Egyptians once did, without the light of the ſun. But our ſtate by nature is far worſe. It is a good thing to be ſenſible that this is our caſe: for ſaith St. Paul, in the 18th verſe of this chapter,—*If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wiſe*; that is, if he ſeems to have a large ſtock of worldly wiſdom, let him renounce it all as inſufficient to lead him into Goſpel truth; let him make Chriſt, by his

word and Spirit, the foundation of all his wiſdom, and then, patiently endure to be called a fool by the world. O, let us be like that poor blind man to whom Jeſus ſaid—*What wouldeſt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? Lord, ſaid he, that I might receive my ſight.* Happy man! he prayed not in vain. *Immediately he received his ſight, and followed Jeſus in the way*, Mark x. So ſhall it be with us, if, like him, we cry, *Jeſus, have mercy on us!* With this deſire let us come to the preaching of the Goſpel: and whenever we open our Bibles, let us pray, *Lord open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee wonderful things in thy law.* We are next to ſhow,

II. Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all *acceptance with God* the Father.

All men are ſinners. This is generally confeſſed. But till Chriſt enlighten the mind of a ſinner he is not affected by it. He ſees not the ſinfulneſs of ſin. He ſees not the horrid impurity of his heart. He is not alarmed with the danger of his condition. He is not aware that the holineſs, juſtice, and truth of God are againſt him. But this is really his caſe. The law of God requires perfect love, and ſinleſs obedience; or it puts the offender under the curſe: for it is written, *Curſed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* You muſt *continue* (without intermiſſion) in *all things* (not keeping nine commandments and breaking the tenth, and not keeping them all outwardly and breaking them in thought) not only to purpoſe well, but to *do* them. And which of us has kept the law in this manner? Who can ſay that he never offended in thought, word, or deed? Certainly every mouth muſt be ſtopped, and all the world become guilty before God, who ſearcheth all hearts.

Now what is the conſequence? *The wages of ſin is death.* God has paſſed the decree, *the ſoul that ſinneth it ſhall die.* God is faithful and juſt to fulfil his decree, and he is almighty to execute his ſentence. What then can be done? Is there no remedy?

medy? Muſt ſinful man ſink for ever under the divine wrath? Two things muſt be done. Full ſatisfaction muſt be made to the holineſs and juſtice of God for paſt offences, and the ſinful nature muſt be renewed and made holy. But can man do theſe? As ſoon might he create a new world. The natural man has neither will nor power to renew and cleanſe his nature. Who can ſay, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from ſin? No man can ſay it truly. It is God's work. So David prayed, *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.* And until God create a clean heart, how can any thing clean proceed out of it? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who, in an impure nature, can do a pure action? Who, under the curſe of the law, under the ſentence of condemnation, can perform a meritorious ſervice? It is impoſſible. The Scripture has declared, *There is none righteous, no not one*; and that *by the deeds of the law no fleſh ſhall be juſtified.*

But what was impoſſible to man is poſſible to God. Bleſſed be his name, he has, in infinite wiſdom and love, deviſed a way for our acceptance—a way honourable to himſelf, and eaſy for us. He has ſent his own Son into our world, in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; and by making him ſin for us, he has condemned ſin in the fleſh, that we may be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. Jeſus Chriſt was God and man in one perſon. By the divine and human natures in him, whatever he did and ſuffered became truly divine and infinite. Our nature was wholly defiled and impure. Chriſt came in a nature perfectly pure and ſpotleſs. In this nature he obeyed the whole law; he continued in all things written in the law to do them. He alſo humbled himſelf to ſuffer what we deſerved to ſuffer for our diſobedience. "He redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us." And thus, "as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, even ſo, by the obedience of one, many are made righteous." Being made perfect through

obeying and ſuffering, he became the author of eternal ſalvation. He is now able to ſave ſinners to the uttermoſt. He has the infinite merit of his obedience to atone for their diſobedience. He has the infinite merit of his ſuffering to free them from ſuffering. He died to ſave them from the ſecond death. He roſe again, that they might riſe to a newneſs of life here in grace, and to life everlaſting in glory. And he now ever lives to make interceſſion, and to act as the Mediator between God and man, able and willing to plead the merit of his life and death for the acceptance of every ſinner who comes to God the Father through him.

Thus is Jeſus Chriſt the foundation of all our acceptance with God. Thus St. Paul ſpeaks, Eph. i. 6, *To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us* ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED. Chriſt is the beloved of the Father, "his dear Son." In him he is well pleaſed—pleaſed with his perſon—pleaſed with his atonement—it was a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavor. And for his ſake, he is well pleaſed with us, if we believe in him; he accepts us *in him*, and loves us as his dear children. This is being ſaved by grace. This ſecures all the glory to God; and his free grace, which is praiſe-worthy and glorious, is magnified by men and angels.

In this way only have ſinners been ſaved from the beginning. The Lord God clothed Adam and Eve with the ſkins of thoſe beaſts they ſlew in ſacrifice, and thus they were accepted through faith in the righteouſneſs of the great Sacrifice, and not by their own righteouſneſs, denoted by the fig-leaves with which they clothed themſelves. It was faith in the promiſed Lamb of God that rendered Abel and his offering more acceptable than Cain and his offering. Thus Abraham was juſtified, for he believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. This righteouſneſs, St. Paul ſays, *was witneſſed by the law and the prophets—even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt unto all, and upon all them that believe.*

And

And now, men and brethren, let it be aſked—Is this *our* foundation? Whatever we look to, hope in, or depend upon, for acceptance with God, that is our foundation. But it highly concerns us to know whether it be this true and ſolid foundation, this "rock of ages," or ſome other, which will fail us in the day of trial. Whatever our foundation be, if it be not Coriſt, it is wrong; for our text ſays—*other foundation can no man lay than* CHRIST. Now, is any man building his hopes on his own works? Is he ſaying, "I am not ſo great a ſinner as ſome are—I do no harm—I do my beſt endeavours—I have a good heart—I ſay my prayers—I go to church—I am ſorry for my ſins—I am charitable to the poor, and ſo on." Suffer me to aſk—*Is this Chriſt?* All this is building on *ſelf*. It diſcovers a total ignorance of our ſinful ſtate by nature, and a total ignorance of the Goſpel which reveals the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. Beſides, if we could work out a righteouſneſs of our own, then there was no occaſion for Jeſus, and he died in vain. O let us beware of ſtumbling, as the Jews did, at this ſtumbling ſtone, Rom. ix. 32; for whoever ſeeks acceptance by the works of the law, ſtumbles againſt this rock, inſtead of building on it. And ſo St. Peter ſpeaks, *Unto you, who believe, he is precious*—he is ſpeaking of Chriſt as the precious corner ſtone of the church; but, he adds, *he is a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence to them which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient*, 1 Peter ii. 7, 8. On the contrary, he makes it the true character of all believers, that they *come to Chriſt the living ſtone, and are built upon him, a ſpiritual houſe*. And this leads us in the next place to ſhew, that,

III. Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all *holy obedience*.

Many perſons are afraid that the doctrine of faith is contrary to good works; and ſome have ſaid—"If we are not to be ſaved by good works, what occaſion is there for them?" We anſwer, "Good works are the breath of faith." A living man breathes,

breathes, and a true faith works. St. James ſpeaks of a pretended, or dead faith, and ſays, *As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.* Works are the proper fruit and evidence of faith, and that which doth not produce them is falſe. But the right faith, that which comes to Chriſt as the foundation, and builds alone on him, is always fruitful. And ſo far is it from being true, that faith is contrary to good works, that we affirm, there can be no good works without faith. The Scripture ſaith, *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, and it declares, that *Faith worketh by love*; and again, that *it purifies the heart*; and again, that it *overcomes the world*; not that faith does all this by its own power, but as it unites us to Chriſt, and derives virtue from him; and thus he is the foundation of all holy obedience.

Man, in his natural ſtate, cannot perform any holy obedience. He wants both will and power, until his perſon be accepted through Jeſus Chriſt, and united to him by true and lively faith. The doctrine of the church of England on this point is very clear and full. In the 13th article ſhe ſays, that "Works done before the grace of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his Spirit, are not pleaſant to God; foraſmuch as they ſpring not of faith in Chriſt—yea, rather for that they are not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of ſin." What then becomes of the merit of works? And how abſurd is it, as Biſhop Beveridge obſerves, to think of "being juſtified by good works, when we can do no good works till we are firſt juſtified." Our fallen nature is wholly ſinful. "In our fleſh dwelleth no good thing;" and till we are in Chriſt, and ſo made new creatures, no good thing can dwell in us. "He that believeth not is condemned already." He is in the ſtate of a rebel condemned to die, who cannot do any legal action till the attainder be removed. Beſides, the dominion of ſin in a natural man is abſolute and univerſal. Sin reigns in his mortal body,

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he obeys it in the luſts thereof; he willingly yields his members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs, uncleanneſs, and iniquity. He is the ſlave of the devil, led captive by him at his will. Satan ſays to him, be drunk, be lewd, be profane, and the wretched ſlave ſubmits, even though his poor body ſuffers for it, and he ſees death and damnation before his eyes. This alſo the Church ſtrongly affirms in her 10th Article. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is ſuch, that he cannot turn and prepare himſelf by his own natural ſtrength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleaſant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Chriſt preventing (going before) us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." This is the doctrine of Scripture—*It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure*, Phil. ii. 13.

There is a real, ſpiritual, though myſterious union between Chriſt and believers, and it is expreſſed in Scripture by various images. For inſtance, Chriſt is the *head* of the body; believers are the members of it. Chriſt is the *vine*; believers are the branches. So he ſaid to his diſciples, John xv. *I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth me and I in him, the ſame bringeth* forth much fruit: for without me, (or ſeparate from me) *ye can do nothing*. It is, therefore, evident that Chriſt muſt be the foundation of all holy obedience. It is not enough to be what the world calls a virtuous man, a good liver, a moral perſon. Acceptable obedience is that which is performed by a man in Chriſt; one, who ſenſible of his ſin and miſery has come to him by faith for wiſdom, then for righteouſneſs, and now for ſtrength. Chriſt dwells in the heart of ſuch a man; and whatever trial he has to bear, whatever duty he has to perform, whatever temptation he has to reſiſt, he comes to Chriſt for ſtrength, and *out of his fulneſs he receives*,

receives, and grace for grace—grace in the believer anſwerable in ſome meaſure to grace in the Saviour. He is conformed to Chriſt both in his death and reſurrection; by the influence of the one, he dies to ſin; by that of the other, he lives to God.

Brethren, is it ſo with you? There are many who ſeem advocates for virtue and morality, and ſome, like the Phariſees, who abound in works of devotion; while, like them, they waſh only the outſide of the cup and platter; forgetting that the heart muſt firſt be purified, and the perſon accepted, before there can be any works performed pleaſing and acceptable to God. We are not to imagine that our own good deſires and endeavours will recommend us to God, that when we have done all the good we can, we may venture to hope in his mercy, and truſt Chriſt as a make-weight to fill up our defects. No; exactly otherwiſe. We muſt firſt come to God, by Chriſt, as miſerable ſinners; receive from him the pardon of our ſins and acceptance of our perſons; and then ſeek the ſanctification of our natures by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the laſt place,

IV. We are to ſhow that Chriſt is the foundation of *all true happineſs* here and hereafter.

Every man longs to be happy; but few are ſo. The reaſon is, men ſeek the living among the dead. It is not in the power of worldly things to make us happy. Sin has written *Vanity* on all the creatures, and filled the world with ſorrow. Man, in his ſearch for happineſs, has turned his back on God, the fountain of true felicity; nor can he ever be happy till he returns to God. This can only be by Jeſus Chriſt. Happineſs muſt commence in reconciliation to God. It was once well ſaid by a miniſter who happened to be at an inn, where he heard ſome perſons full of vain and noiſy mirth—"Gentlemen, ſaid he, if your ſins are forgiven, you do well to be merry." But what title has that man to happineſs who is a child of wrath and under the curſe of the

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broken law. But when a ſinner has fled for refuge to Chriſt, he is entitled to ſtrong conſolation. He that believeth hath everlaſting life. Being juſtified by faith he hath peace with God. *Be of good cheer*, ſaid Chriſt to ſome, *your ſins are forgiven you*. And it is the happineſs of ſome now to know this aſſuredly. Having the Spirit of God as a ſpirit of conviction, humiliation, faith, prayer, and holineſs, they have thereby the *ſeal* of God, the *witneſs* or *teſtimony* of God, that they have paſſed from death unto life. They taſte that the Lord is gracious. They find ſolid delight in his word and ways. A day ſpent in his courts is better than a thouſand, and they prefer an hour of communion with him to all the years they ſpent in vanity and ſin.

This is the earneſt of heaven. Their happineſs now is in having Chriſt with them. Their happineſs hereafter ſhall conſiſt in being with Chriſt, to behold and to ſhare his glory. An inheritance is reſerved for them which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. Freed from this body of ſin and death, delivered from this preſent evil world, they ſhall be for ever employed in admiring, adoring, and praiſing the riches of free, ſovereign, and diſtinguiſhing grace. At preſent we are unable to form a juſt idea of heavenly glory, but this we know as to true happineſs, whether on earth or in heaven, Jeſus Chriſt is all in all.

To conclude. We have now ſeen that Jeſus Chriſt is the foundation of all true wiſdom—of all acceptance with God—of all obedience, and of all real happineſs. And is he ſo to *us?* Do we apply to him that we may become wiſe to ſalvation? Do we ſeek and expect pardon and acceptance only thro' him? Do we derive grace and ſtrength from him? And is he the ſource of our happineſs? Important enquiries, Brethren, worthy your ſerious attention! O, you that build for eternity, examine your foundation, for if it be not *Chriſt*, it will fail. The houſe will fall, and great will be the fall of it.

But

But ſome have believed, through grace. Take encouragement from what God himſelf ſays in commendation of this foundation, Iſa. xxviii. 16, "*Behold I lay in Sion, for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone; a precious corner-ſtone; a ſure foundation. He that believeth, ſhall not make haſte.*"—*A ſtone.* Every thing elſe is ſliding ſand, is yielding air, is a breaking bubble. *A tried ſtone.* Tried by millions of depraved and ruined creatures, who always found him able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt. *A corner ſtone,* uniting Jews and Gentiles, and all believers, in one harmonious bond of brotherly love. *A precious ſtone.* More precious than rubies; the pearl of great price; and the deſire of all nations. *A ſure foundation.* Such as no preſſure can ſhake; ſuch as will never fail thoſe humble penitents who caſt their burden on the Lord. *Whoſoever believeth,* though preſſed with adverſities, or ſurrounded by dange s, ſhall not make haſte. He ſhall poſſeſs his ſoul in patience. And not only amidſt the perilous changes of life, but even in the day of judgement he ſhall ſtand with boldneſs. He ſhall *look up* to the grand Arbitrator—*look round,* on all the ſolemnity of his appearance—*look forward,* to the unalterable ſentence—and neither feel anxiety, nor fear damnation.

5 DEC60

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SERMON,

ON

1 JOHN, v. 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one.

ALL religion ſuppoſes the worſhip of a God; and therefore, in all worſhip, the firſt thing to be conſidered is, *who* that God is; or what ſort of a being is to be worſhipped. The Heathens worſhipped a great many gods; as many as thirty thouſand have been mentioned: But all Chriſtians admit that there is but ONE only, the living and true God. Now all the knowledge we have of God is from the Scriptures. If God had not been pleaſed to give us the Bible, we ſhould to this day have been worſhipping idols, as the former inhabitants of this country did, and as many millions of Pagans now do. Reaſon alone, never yet led any people to the right knowledge of God, nor ever will. The learned Greeks and wiſe Romans knew no more of God than the ſavage Indians. The knowledge of God which Noah and his ſons had, was gradually loſt and corrupted. But God made himſelf known in a particular manner to Abraham, and to his poſterity the Jews; among whom the knowledge of the true God was preſerved till the time of Chriſt, and now by his Goſpel, this knowledge is given to us, and to all who receive the Scriptures as the word of God.

Now, the ſame Scriptures which aſſure us there is but *one* God, ſpeak of him under the three names of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*; and our text plainly declares that *theſe three are one*. This doctrine is generally called the doctrine of the *Trinity*, which ſignifies *Tri-Unity*, or, three in one. This doctrine has been thought by moſt Chriſtians to be very plainly revealed in the word of God; nevertheleſs there were ſome perſons of old, and there are ſome now, who diſpute or deny it; and theſe people are called *Arians*, or *Socinians*; and ſome of them now call themſelves *Unitarians*. We ought to be much on our guard againſt thoſe who would rob us of "the faith once delivered to the ſaints," and of which this is an eminent part. For you will pleaſe to obſerve, that thoſe who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, ſeldom ſtop there; they generally deny alſo the atonement of Jeſus Chriſt, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and ſo leave us very little of the Goſpel to believe. Indeed, many who begin their apoſtacy in the denial of the Trinity, complete it in becoming downright Infidels and Atheiſts. As a right notion of God is connected with all true faith and holy practice, it is of great conſequence for us to be well eſtabliſhed in this doctrine. It ſhall therefore be our preſent buſineſs to prove, that,

In the Unity of the Godhead, there are three divine Perſons.

It may be proper to remark that, with reſpect to this doctrine, it is not neceſſary that we ſhould be able fully to *explain* it, or ſhew how the three divine perſons ſubſiſt. This is, and muſt be, a *myſtery*. There are many people, in this age of reaſon, as they call it, who diſlike and reject every thing myſterious; but this ariſes entirely from their pride. There are many myſteries in nature; we are myſteries to ourſelves. We know little of the nature of our own bodies, and ſtill leſs of our ſouls. Is it any wonder then that we ſhould know little of God, or that the divine nature ſhould be myſterious

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to us? Let us beware of pride, eſpecially the pride of our underſtandings. This pride ruined the angels who fell. It ruined our firſt parents; and it will ruin us eternally, if it be ſuffered to prevail. As we ſhould never have known any thing of God but by the Bible, let us be content to take the Bible account of God, which is, indeed, his own account of himſelf. And let us remember what our Saviour ſaid to his diſciples, when he diſcovered the workings of pride among them, Matt. xviii. 3. Having ſet a child in the midſt of them, he ſaid, *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* A little child is obliged to take upon truſt, what his infant capacity cannot yet comprehend; and it is the office of Chriſtian faith, to take God at his word.

I would alſo remark that, in our reception of this Scripture doctrine, we are not bound to adopt the mode of expreſſion uſed or inforced by any particular divines or churches. Some good men, in their attempts to explain the doctrine, have rather perplexed it. Some good men have ſaid, that "the Father is the fountain of Deity"—that "he communicated his whole eſſence to the Son"—that "the Son is eternally begotten of the Father," and that he is "very God, of very God." As theſe expreſſions are only private interpretations of a Bible truth, we are at liberty to admit or reject them, as they appear us to be ſcriptural or not.

Now let us proceed to a brief proof of the doctrine advanced, viz. *In the Unity of the Godhead there are three divine Perſons.* By *Godhead*, we mean the divine nature. We maintain the *Unity* of the godhead; that there is but one God; yet we aſſert, as our text does, that there are *three* in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and that theſe three are one *. There is but one God. It

* Perhaps you will be told that this verſe is not found in ſome ancient manuſcripts of the New Teſtament, but has been added by the

It is impoſſible there ſhould be more. Reaſon itſelf ſhews that there cannot be more than one being, who is *firſt*. God is the *firſt cauſe* of all being, and we cannot conceive of two or more *firſt* cauſes. God is alſo a ſelf-ſufficient being; he exiſted alone; he can do every thing of himſelf; he needs not the help of other beings. "Now, if there were *two* ſuch beings, they could do no more than one could do; if they could, then one could not be *ſelf-ſufficient* and *all-ſufficient*; each of them could not be of God, if they could want or receive any help from one another. There cannot therefore be two gods; for if one is *all-ſufficient*, the other would be needleſs and uſeleſs." It is the great doctrine of Scripture that there is one God, Iſa. xlv. 5. "I am the LORD, and there is none elſe; there is no God beſide me." Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Iſrael; the LORD our God is one LORD." Mark xii. 32. "There is one God; and there is none other but he." Jer. xxiii. 24. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? ſaith the Lord." 1 Kings, viii. 39, "For thou, even thou only, knoweſt the hearts of all the children of men." This is the God alone who ought to be worſhipped. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.*

The adverſaries of this doctrine call themſelves *Unitarians*, by which they mean to intimate their belief of only one God, and inſinuate that we, who believe the Trinity, admit of more than one God. But we deny the charge. We maintain, as ſtrongly as they, that there is only one God; and we think it perfectly conſiſtent with this belief to acknowledge three Perſons in the Godhead. We allow that the word *perſons* is not found in Scripture, and may convey an idea ſomewhat too groſs. But this is owing to the poverty of our language, which does not fur-

Trinitarians. But we are aſſured by men of the firſt learning and credibility, that it is found in the moſt ancient copies; and whoever examines will find that the ſenſe of the chapter is not complete without it. But the truth of the doctrine does not depend on a ſenſe, as we ſhall plainly prove.

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niſh us with a better term. And we think it juſtifiable, becauſe *perſonal properties* and *perſonal acts* are aſcribed to each of the divine three. But we contend not for the word, but the thing. It is enough for us to ſay with the text *there are* THREE *that bear record in heaven, the* FATHER, *the* WORD, *and the* HOLY GHOST.

That there is a *plurality* in the Deity is evident from the Old Teſtament. This, you know, was written in *Hebrew*; and, the name which is generally tranſlated by the Engliſh word *God*, is, in the Hebrew, *plural*, and ſignifies more than one. It is *Elohim*, which is in the plural number, as *Gods* would be in Engliſh: and this word is often joined with the Hebrew word JEHOVAH, which is tranſlated LORD; and whenever you find the word *Lord* in capital letters thus (LORD) it means *Jehovah*, a name which ſignifies the eſſence of God, "He who was, and is, and is to come." Now there is a paſſage in *Deut.* vi. 4, where you have both theſe names, and which fully proves the doctrine of the Trinity. *Hear, O Iſrael: The* LORD *our* GOD *is one* LORD. If the word *Lord* and the word *God* ſignified juſt the ſame, the paſſage would be nonſenſe; it would be only ſaying, the Lord is Lord, or one is one: But the meaning is JEHOVAH, our *Elohim*, our covenant God, Father, Son, and Spirit, is one Jehovah. He is one in eſſence, though three in perſon. The Jews are unwilling to own that this is the meaning of the names of God in Hebrew, but it is intirely owing to their hatred to Jeſus Chriſt. If any are converted to Chriſtianity, as ſome have been, they own it immediately *. Thus "*John Xeres*, a converted Jew about 70 years ago, when he publiſhed his reaſons for becoming a Chriſtian, ſays, "The Chriſtians confeſs Jeſus to be God; and it is this that makes us look upon the Goſpels as books

* See an excellent treatiſe, entitled The Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity, proved by above an hundred ſhort and clear Arguments in the Words of Scripture, by Mr. Jones, Rector of Pluckley, &c. printed for Rivington.

that overturn the very principles of religion, the truth of which is built upon this article, the *Unity of God*. In this argument lies the ſtrength of what you object againſt in the Chriſtian religion." Then he undertakes to prove, that the unity of God is not ſuch as he once underſtood it to be, in unity of *Perſon* but of *Eſſence*, under which more perſons than one are comprehended; and the firſt proof he offers, is that of the name of *Elohim*. Why elſe, ſays he, is that frequent mention of *God* by means of the plural number? as in Gen. i. 1, where the word *Elohim*, which is rendered *God*, is of the plural number, though annexed to a verb of the ſingular number; which demonſtrates, that there are ſeveral perſons partaking of the ſame divine nature and eſſence."

This *plurality* is reſtricted to a *Trinity* of perſons, namely three, whoſe names we have in the text. And here obſerve, that the names, *Father*, *Word* or *Son*, and *Spirit*, are not intended to deſcribe the manner in which the three divine perſons *ſubſiſt*, but the manner in which they *act*: not, what they are *in themſelves* (that is not revealed) but what they are *to us*, according to the reſpective offices which they have been pleaſed to aſſume in the redemption of man. And therefore, though one of the names of office may ſeem greater than the reſt; yet, this does not denote that the perſon who bears that name is greater than the other. The name of the *Father* may ſeem greater than that of the *Son*, or of the *Spirit*; and Chriſt ſpeaks of the Father as greater than he; and the Spirit as well as the Son is "ſent;" but as theſe are names of *office*, and not of eſſence, they only deſcribe the nature of the office aſſumed, which may be greater or leſs; but as to the eſſence there is no difference nor inequality; but as it is expreſſed in the Athanaſian Creed—"In this Trinity, none is afore nor after other: none is greater or leſs than another; but the whole three perſons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. The Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt is all one: the glory equal, the majeſty co-eternal."

Our

Our further proof of the Trinity ſhall be from the hiſtory of man's creation—the application of the name of Deity to each divine Perſon diſtinctly—the inſtitution of baptiſm;—and the apoſtolical bleſſing.

In the hiſtory of man's creation we find theſe words, Gen. i. 26, *And* GOD *ſaid, Let* US *make man in* OUR *image, after* OUR *likeneſs.* Surely this expreſſion denotes that there is a plurality of perſons in the divine nature, or why ſhould it be uſed? Some tell us it is only an accommodation to the mode of ſpeaking uſed by kings, who in their public acts ſay, *we* and *us.* But this is ridiculous; for kings had no exiſtence before the creation of man. Beſides, kings uſe this phraſe out of modeſty, or to ſignify the concurrence of their council; but *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſellor?* Rom. xi. 34. In like manner we find the Lord God ſaying, after man had fallen, Gen. iii. 22, *Behold the man is become like* ONE OF US. Some think this was ſpoken *ironically*, in alluſion to Satan's promiſe, when he tempted our firſt parents to eat of the forbidden tree, *Ye ſhall be as God, &c.* Others think it refers to the covenant, in which *one* of the divine perſons had engaged to become *man*, in order to redeem man. Be this as it may, the expreſſion plainly proves a plurality, ſuch as is more plainly expreſſed, John i. 1. *In the beginning was the* WORD, (the very name uſed for Chriſt in the text) and the WORD was with *God, and the* WORD *was God.* But again,

The name of God is applied to each of the divine perſons diſtinctly. That the *Father* is called *God* need not be proved. *Jeſus Chriſt* is alſo called *God* in many places of Scripture. Thomas ſaid to him, John xx. 28, *My* LORD, *and my* GOD. St. Paul ſays, Rom. ix. 5, *He is* GOD *over all, bleſſed for ever.* St. John ſays, 1 Epheſ. v. 20, *Jeſus Chriſt is the* TRUE GOD, *and eternal life.* The Pſalmiſt ſays, that the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs *tempted and provoked* THE MOST HIGH GOD; and St. Paul, ſpeaking of the ſame thing, ſays, *they tempted Chriſt*; conſe-

conſequently he is *the moſt high God*. Pſalm lxxviii. 56. and 1 Cor. x. 9. Iſaiah had a viſion, concerning which he ſays, *Mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſts*, Iſaiah vi. 5. St. John, ſpeaking of that viſion ſays, *theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his* (CHRIST'S) *glory, and ſpake of him*, John xii. 41; from whence it follows, that Jeſus is the LORD *of* HOSTS. And let it be carefully obſerved, that the name LORD or JEHOVAH, which ſignifies the eſſence of God, is never, upon any occaſion, given to a creature. Yet this name is given to Jeſus Chriſt, as in the text laſt mentioned, and alſo in the following, Jer. xxiii. 6, *This is the name whereby he ſhall be called, the* LORD (that is JEHOVAH) *our righteouſneſs*. Now, who is the righteouſneſs of believers? Every Chriſtian knows, that *Chriſt is made unto us—righteouſneſs*. And in Iſaiah, xliii. 11, *I, even I, am the Lord, and beſides me there is no Saviour*. But we know who alone is the Saviour of the world, even *our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. But unleſs he were God as well as man, he could be no Saviour; for Jehovah ſays, there is no Saviour beſides himſelf *. Paſſing by many more texts, for want of room, we ſhall mention but one more in proof of our Lord's divinity. Our Saviour has graciouſly promiſed his preſence with all his people whenever they aſſemble together. See Matt. xviii. 20. *When two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them*. Now, how is it poſſible for Chriſt to be preſent in all the thouſands of places where Chriſtians are aſſembled, unleſs he be the true God?

In like manner we might ſhew, that the peculiar names of Deity are given to the *Holy Spirit*, and

* If the reader wiſhes to ſee more proofs of this kind, let him conſult the following places, Iſaiah viii. 13, 14, with 1 Peter ii. 7, 8. Iſ. xliv. 6, with Rev. xxii. 13. Luke i. 76, with Matt. xi. 10. 2 Cor. v. 19, John xiv. 11, Iſaiah ix. 6, Rev. i. 8, 1 Kings viii. 39, with Rev. ii. 23. And as to thoſe places in which Chriſt ſaith, The Father is greater than I, &c. they are to be underſtood as his human nature and office, or as the Creed expreſſes it, "*inferior to the Father as touching his manhood.*"

that

that, therefore, he alſo is a Perſon, and a divine perſon. One, out of many, may be ſufficient. St. Peter, reproving Ananias for the lye he had told reſpecting his ſubſtance, ſaith, Acts v. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lye unto the* HOLY GHOST? and, in the next verſe, he adds—*Thou haſt not lyed unto men, but unto* GOD. This is a moſt plain and undeniable proof that the Holy Ghoſt is God *.

The ordinance of *Chriſtian baptiſm* affords another proof of the Trinity. In the baptiſm of our Lord himſelf, a voice from heaven ſaid—*This is my beloved Son*; alſo, *the Holy Spirit deſcended viſibly* in the manner and form of a dove, *lighting upon him*, Matt. iii. 16. Here was the Trinity. The FATHER teſtifying to the SON, and the SPIRIT deſcending upon him. Hence, the primitive Chriſtians uſed to ſay, to any who doubted the truth of this doctrine, "Go to Jordan, and you will ſee the Trinity." Plainer ſtill is this truth from the form of words appointed to be uſed in Chriſtian baptiſm—*Baptiſe them in the name of the* FATHER, *and of the* SON, *and of the* HOLY GHOST. This is an ordinance of initiation; it ſtands as it were at the threſhold of Chriſtianity; ſo that in taking upon us this diſtinguiſhing badge of the Chriſtian profeſſion, we avow this great doctrine. We are baptiſed into the *name* of each divine Perſon, that is, by the *authority* of each, and into the *faith*, *worſhip*, and *profeſſion* of each, equally and alike, as the One God of the Chriſtian religion. Hereby we profeſs the Trinity, that is, One God in three Perſons, in oppoſition to all falſe gods and falſe worſhip, and thereby dedicate ourſelves to them, according to their perſonal relations: to the *Father* as our Creator, and as reconciled in Chriſt; to *Chriſt* as our Redeemer, to deliver us from the guilt and power of ſin; and to the *Holy Spirit*, to teach, comfort, and ſanctify us. This is a kind of proof of

* Other proofs may be found in Acts xiii. 2, 4, 2 Tim. iii. 16, compared with 2 Pet i. 21. 1 Cor. iii. 16, with 1 Cor. vi. 19. 1 Cor. ii. 11. 14. Pſalm cxxxix. 7.

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the doctrine ſuited to the weakeſt capacity. Each of the ſacred three is mentioned diſtinctly and by name, which certainly implies a diſtinction of perſons; yet they are all united in the ſame ordinance of baptiſm, which ſhews their equality and unity. So that all who would renounce that ſacred ordinance, may ſee in it a full, clear, and ſatisfactory proof of the Trinity.

Much the ſame may be ſaid of the Apoſtolical benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, *The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all. Amen.* In theſe words St. Paul prayed for the Corinthians, and in the ſame words almoſt all Chriſtian miniſters pray for their people at the cloſe of every public ſervice. It is a kind of prayer to each divine perſon ſingly, expreſſing a deſire that the people may partake of the grace of *Chriſt*, who is "full of grace," through whoſe mediation we are reconciled to God—that they may alſo enjoy the love of *God*, namely, of God the Father, which is the ſource of our whole ſalvation, manifeſted in the gift of his Son, his Spirit, and his word—and finally, that they may partake of the *Holy Ghoſt*, as all real Chriſtians do, in his application to their ſouls, of all the bleſſings of ſalvation, proceeding from the Father, and flowing to us through the Son. And thus are we continually reminded of this great truth, and led alſo to make a practical uſe of it, in ſeeking from each of the divine perſons the peculiar bleſſings that each, in the œconomy of the covenant, has undertaken to beſtow.

APPLICATION.

From what has been ſaid, however briefly, it is ſufficiently evident that the Doctrine of the Trinity is a *ſcriptural* doctrine; and as ſuch, we are bound to receive it, unleſs we renounce our Bibles. It is true that it is a ſublime and myſterious doctrine; yet there is nothing at all in it contrary to reaſon. Some men make a great outcry againſt it. They tell us it is abſolutely impoſſible *that there ſhould be*

one,

one, and that Trinitarians muſt believe there are *three gods*. In anſwer to this we ſay, we do not affirm that the *three* are *one*, in the ſame ſenſe that they are *three*. They are *three*, in one reſpect; *one*, in another. We ſay they are *three*, *in perſon*; *one*, *in eſſence*. We affirm that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are not three Gods, but one God. We have abundantly proved from Scripture, that there are Three to whom divine names are given, divine attributes aſcribed, and divine offices aſſigned; and we affirm, with our text, and according to the whole tenor of the Scripture, and the voice of reaſon too, that there are three in one. And what is there in all this abſurd or contradictory? Were we to affirm that three are one, in the ſame reſpect as they are three, it would, no doubt, be a contradiction in terms; we ſay not that three perſons are one perſon, or three Gods are one God; but we ſay that the three perſons are one God. This is revealed, therefore we believe it; and though we cannot fully comprehend it, we think it becomes ſuch weak and fallible creatures as ourſelves, humbly to receive it, with other truths, as the word of God and not of man.

But it is by no means enough merely to aſſent to the doctrine, we ought to make a practical uſe of it. It is far from being a matter of ſpeculation; it is a branch of our "moſt holy faith." We ſhould be concerned not to hold this, or any other truth, in unrighteouſneſs: and no doctrine, however true and important, will avail us, without an experience of its ſanctifying power on our hearts. Let us be concerned then as periſhing ſinners, to apply to each of the divine perſons; to the Father, for the pardon of our ſins, through his infinite love and free mercy; to the Son, for an intereſt in his blood, righteouſneſs, and interceſſion; and to the Holy Spirit for his illuminating, ſanctifying, quickening, and influencing comforts.

Let us adore and praiſe the eternal Three; the Father for his electing love, and the unſpeakable gift

of

of that love, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his only begotten Son. Let us adore and praiſe the dear Redeemer, aſcribing bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and praiſe, to him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood. Let us adore and praiſe the Holy Spirit, for his gracious influences, accompanying the word of truth, whereby we knew ourſelves, and felt the power of the Goſpel to our ſalvation. Thus ſhall we reſemble the bleſſed angels, who are inceſſantly praiſing the glorious Trinity, and crying, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

We ſhall cloſe the whole with that excellent Collect uſed by the Church of England on Trinity Sunday.

"Almighty and everlaſting God, who haſt given unto us thy ſervants grace, by the confeſſion of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal TRINITY, and in the power of the divine majeſty to worſhip the UNITY; we beſeech thee that thou wouldeſt keep us ſtedfaſt in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adverſities, who liveſt and reigneſt One God, world without end. Amen."

5 DE60

The Power of the Goſpel.

SERMON,

ON

ROMANS i. 16.

I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt; for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth.

IF we wiſely conſider the ſigns of the times, we are conſtrained to ſay, "this is a day of rebuke and blaſphemy." Knowledge increaſes; Arts and Sciences flouriſh; commerce is extended; almoſt every thing is in a ſtate of improvement—but, what ſhall we ſay of Religion? Alas, how many among us content themſelves with the name and the ſhadow of it, while they deny its power. How many others, ſtill more careleſs, neglect even the form of godlineſs: while others, grown bolder in ſin, are weary of the Goſpel itſelf; diſpute its truth; revile its power; and are ſeated in the chair of the ſcorner; in a word, are "aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt."

Not ſo, that great and good man whoſe words we have read. He was a bold and ſucceſsful miniſter of the Goſpel. He had preached it in many countries, but hitherto had no opportunity of preaching it at Rome; but hearing that there were Chriſtians even there, he ſends them this letter, expreſſes his love to their ſouls, and his earneſt deſire to come and preach Chriſt's Goſpel there. It was a great and populous city, one of the greateſt in the world, and he well knew he ſhould meet with much oppoſition, and perhaps be in danger of his life; yet he ſays, *I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of*

Chriſt, adding this good reaſon for his boldneſs, *for it is the power of God to ſalvation*, to every believer, whether Jew or Gentile. Now, that it may, by the bleſſing of God, be ſo to us, let us,

I. Take a general view of the *nature* of the Goſpel.

II. Conſider the important *deſign* and *uſe* of it—it is *the power of God to ſalvation*; and then,

III. Shew that there is no reaſon why we ſhould be *aſhamed* of it, but rather that we ought to *glory* in it.

I. Let us take a general view of the *nature* of the Goſpel. What is the Goſpel? what do we mean by it? It may be feared that many, who are called Chriſtians, would be at a loſs for an anſwer to this queſtion. Now there are ſeveral points of view in which we may behold the Goſpel. It certainly contains *a hiſtory of the moſt remarkable and important events*, eſpecially the incarnation of the Son of God, his holy and ſpotleſs life, his amazing miracles, his excellent ſermons, his bloody paſſion and cruel death, his reſurrection from the grave, and his aſcenſion to glory. The Goſpel alſo contains *The pureſt and beſt ſyſtem of morals* that was ever offered to the world; and would to God they were but practiſed! The Goſpel likewiſe diſplays *The infinite perfections of God*, his holineſs, juſtice, and love eſpecially; for "he who was in the boſom of the Father hath declared him." The Goſpel demands our attention alſo, as it affords *A wonderful diſcovery of a future ſtate*, an eternal heaven and hell, in one of which, each of us muſt ſoon be fixed for ever. In all theſe reſpects the Goſpel diſcovers and requires our ſerious and cordial regard.

But all this falls infinitely ſhort of the true nature of the Goſpel. The word *Goſpel*, in the original, ſignifies, *Good news* or *Glad tidings*, as it is written in the prophet Iſa. lii. 7, and quoted by St. Paul, Rom. x. 15. *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*—obſerve—*glad tidings of good things*.

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This is a juſt deſcription of the Goſpel; never were there *things ſo good* as thoſe contained in the Goſpel; never were there *tidings ſo glad*, as thoſe reported by the Goſpel. You are to conſider the Goſpel as *a meſſage of mercy from God to ſinners*—as a declaration of his good will to loſt and ruined man. Take it in Chriſt's own words—*God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. Or*, take it in the words of St. Paul, *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners.* Now you will obſerve in theſe texts, the *condition* of thoſe, to whom theſe glad tidings are ſent—a world of men ready to periſh, and who *muſt* have periſhed if God had not ſent his Son to ſave them. They are *ſinners* whom Chriſt came to ſave. My friends, we can never rightly underſtand one word of the Goſpel, unleſs we know and feel our miſerable and periſhing eſtate as ſinners. In Adam we all fell. From him we derive a ſiuful nature. Our minds are total darkneſs, as to God, and the things which belong to our peace. Our hearts are diſaffected to God; we ſhun him; we fly from him, as Adam did when he had ſinned. And, as to our *lives*, they are lives of rebellion againſt him. Our carnal minds are *enmity againſt God, they are not ſubject to the law of God, neither can they be*, till renewed by grace. And being breakers of the holy law, we are under the curſe and penalty of it; obnoxious to the divine wrath, and liable, every minute, to death and damnation.

Now, do we know this; do we believe this; do we feel and lament that this is our caſe; and does this lead us to cry out in good earneſt, "Men and Brethren, what muſt we do to be ſaved?" If ſo, we are prepared to receive the good news of the Goſpel. To ſuch perſons, eſpecially, is the word of this ſalvation ſent. It informs them that God, in his infinite mercy to ſinful man, has ſent his only begotten Son to take our nature; and in this

nature, and as our ſurety, to obey the laws which we had broken; to make an atonement, or ſatisfaction for ſin, by his death, and ſo reconcile us to God. And alſo that he will give his Holy Spirit to his people, by whoſe influences, accompanying the Goſpel, their minds ſhall be enlightened in the knowledge of the truth; they ſhall be enabled to believe in Jeſus; to repent of all their ſins after a godly ſort, and to become new creatures, ſo as to love, obey, and enjoy him here, and at length to be made perfectly happy in heaven for ever.

And is not this good news? So the firſt Chriſtians thought. When Philip went down to Samaria, and "preached Chriſt" there, we are told *there was great joy in that city*. When the Galatians firſt heard a Goſpel preacher, they received him *as an angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus*; *and it had been poſſible, they would have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to him*; ſuch was *the bleſſedneſs* they then enjoyed. And when the poor Heathen jailer of Philippi was brought to the ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, *he rejoiced, believing in God with all his houſe*. And ſo it will be with us, in ſome meaſure, if we are ſenſible of our need of Chriſt, and if we heartily receive this good news. If an army of rebels, ſubdued in war, and at the will of their conqueror, were doomed to death; would it not fill their hearts with joy to be told that the king, for the ſake of his ſon, had freely pardoned them all, and received them to his favour, and would never more remember their offence? Or if a company of miſerable priſoners, in ſuch a place as the French baſtile or the Spaniſh inquiſition, who had endured all the horrors of a rigorous confinement for many years, were to hear the ſound of liberty and freedom, would it not gladden their very ſouls? Such are "the glad tidings of great joy" which the Goſpel brings to this preſent company to-day; and ſuch will be their effect too, if you believe to the ſaving of your ſouls.

And this, you will perceive, is a very different ſcheme

ſcheme from that of thoſe, who tell us, that if we are but ſincere, and do as well as we can, God is merciful, and we need not fear; and who make no more of Chriſt than a good man, who came to teach good things, and to ſet us a good example, and to aſſure us that God will accept our repentance and ſincere obedience, inſtead of that which his law requires. Beware of this merely moral ſcheme; it will be poiſon to your ſouls. If Paul had taught only morality, he need not have ſaid, *I am not aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt*. The philoſophers of Rome would have made no objection to it: but it was the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, the ſacrifice of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which they deſpiſed. The croſs was the ſtumbling block of the Jews, and the banter of the Gentiles. But nothing deſerves the name of Goſpel which does not make a precious Jeſus, "all in all," "the firſt and the laſt" in our whole ſalvation. Therefore, when the ſalvation began to be corrupted by falſe teachers, who told them they muſt be circumciſed and keep the law of Moſes, beſides believing in Chriſt, St. Paul cried out aloud againſt the motley mixture of Chriſt's righteouſneſs and man's righteouſneſs; he called it *another Goſpel*, and proteſted againſt it, ſaying, "if any man preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed. We are now to conſider,

II. The important *deſign* and *uſe* of the Goſpel—it is the *power* of *God* unto ſalvation, that is, it is the powerful inſtrument which God employs, and makes effectual to the ſalvation of believing ſinners.

Salvation is the grand object which God has in view in the Goſpel. Salvation is a great word, but a greater thing. Nothing ſo great, nothing ſo important as the ſalvation of a ſoul that muſt be happy or miſerable for ever. And it is ſad to think that poor thoughtleſs mortals ſhould ever uſe ſuch a word in a light and profane manner. What is more common than to hear a perſon ſay—As I hope

hope to be ſaved! And what notion have ſuch people of ſalvation? They only hope that when they die "they ſhall not go down to hell, a place of fire and torment; but that they ſhall go up to heaven, to ſome fine unknown ſhining place above the ſkies, where they ſhall be free from all pain and uneaſineſs." Poor ignorant creatures, they have no deſire to be ſaved from ſin, neither the guilt nor the power of it; no deſire to have their hearts changed, their nature refined, and their ſouls filled with the love of Chriſt. But the ſalvation propoſed in the Goſpel is great and glorious beyond deſcription; the greateſt bleſſing that God can beſtow or man receive. And it is by the Goſpel that he conveys this bleſſing. Wiſe men in all ages have ſeen the need of ſome remedy for human nature in its miſerable rnd fallen ſtate. Philoſophers and Lawgivers have tried their ſkill in vain. They were phyſicians of no value. The Goſpel provides the only medicine for the cure of the ſoul, and this is effectual. It is God's power to ſalvation. It is the powerful mean, in the hand of the Spirit to ſave us from the guilt of ſin, and to give us a right to heaven; and to ſave us from the power of ſin, and make us fit for heaven.

I. It is the power of God with reſpect to the pardon of our ſins, and the juſtification of our perſons. Without the Goſpel, we could never have been ſure that the great God would pardon a ſinner; we could never have known upon what terms he would do it. We could never have been certain that we were actually in a ſtate of favour. But the Goſpel is a meſſage from God himſelf, aſſuring us not only that "there is forgiveneſs with him," but inviting us to apply for it and accept of it. The Goſpel is *the miniſtry of reconciliation, namely, That God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them.* God has appointed and accepted the mediation and ſacrifice of his Son, for the ſatisfaction of his law and juſtice, and making peace; ſo that he might

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not charge any ſin, or inflict any puniſhment, upon thoſe who believe, or receive the atonement. Upon this ground, the miniſters of the Goſpel, as ambaſſadors for Chriſt, pray and beſeech ſinners to be reconciled to God. Since ſatisfaction is actually made to the juſtice of God by the death of his Son, that he may honourably ſhew favour to ſinners, they intreat them, by theſe gracious encouragements, to throw down their arms of rebellion, to ſubmit to mercy in God's own way, and to yield themſelves up to him without reſerve, that everlaſting peace and friendſhip may be eſtabliſhed.

That this is the principal deſign of the text appears from the next verſe. *For in the Goſpel is the righteouſneſs of God by faith, revealed to faith,* the righteouſneſs of Chriſt which becomes ours by faith, is revealed to be believed on, and truſted in. Now, God makes this Goſpel his power to ſalvation. This is the doctrine which he owns and bleſſes. By the power of his Spirit he opens the underſtanding to receive it, and the heart to believe it. Thus the ſinner comes to God, is accepted and ſaved.

2. It is the power of God with reſpect to the renewing our ſpirit, reſtoring the image of God in our ſouls, ſubduing our ſins, and forming us to that "holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord." It was as much the deſign of Chriſt to ſave us from ſin, as to ſave us from hell. We are to eſteem it a precious part of his ſalvation, to be delivered from the ſlavery of the devil, and the tyranny of our native corruptions. The doctrine of "Salvation, by grace, through faith," is ſo far from being contrary to holineſs, or hurtful in good works, that it is God's powerful inſtrument of producing them. The Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt contains the pureſt precepts in the world. The inſtructions of Chriſt to his diſciples contain the nobleſt morality, infinitely finer than all that the Heathen ſages ever knew. The Goſpel alſo furniſhes us with motives to obedience, infinitely ſtronger than any other. Here ſin appears to be ſinful indeed, eſpecially in the agonies and ſufferings

ferings of Jeſus. Here holineſs appears with heavenly beauty, in the character and conduct of the dear Redeemer. Here we are forcibly drawn by the love of Chriſt, who requires, as a proof of our love to him, that we keep his commandments. He expects all his followers to reſemble him. He requires them to deny themſelves and take up their croſs daily; to mortify the deeds of the body; to part with ſin though as dear as a right hand or a right eye; to ſet their affections on things above; to be fervent in their devotions to God; to abound in every good word and work; to be honeſt and juſt in all their actions; to be charitable to the poor and needy; to viſit the ſick, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked; in a word, to "love our neighbour as ourſelves."

Nor does the Goſpel only require ſuch holy diſpoſitions and actions, but it enables believers to attain and perform them. By the ſame faith which receives Chriſt as our righteouſneſs, we are united to him, (for without him we can do nothing) and by virtue of union to him we can do all things. As the branch derives virtue from the tree to bear fruit, ſo believers receive "out of the fulneſs of Chriſt, grace for grace," ſo that they bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, which are by Jeſus Chriſt, to the glory of God the Father.

3. The ſalvation of God thus begun, ſhall be perfected in glory. Grace is the bud of glory. Even now, the heirs of heaven have a foretaſte of heaven. They have the Spirit of God, who is the *Seal* and the *Earneſt*. *Hereby*, ſaith St. John, *know we that we dwell in God, and he in us*, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit. This is the great evidence, the great ground of aſſurance, that we are in a ſtate of ſalvation; that we have everlaſting life: And having the earneſt, we may depend upon the full poſſeſſion. What a ſource of conſolation is this, in all the troubles of this miſerable world! Here only is an antidote to death. And this is enough. If ſin be pardoned, death cannot hurt us.

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The ſting of death is ſin, but Chriſt has extracted the ſting. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Soon ſhall the believer be delivered from all the trials of the preſent ſtate. The ſeparated ſpirit ſhall be with Chriſt; and the mortal body ſhall be raiſed a glorious body. *Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father.* And thus, you ſee, the Goſpel is the power of God, to preſent an eternal ſalvation. And is this a thing to be aſhamed of? God forbid. This is what we were in the third and laſt place to prove, namely, that

III. There is no reaſon why we ſhould be aſhamed of the Goſpel, but rather that we ought to glory in it.

Shame is a very powerful paſſion. It was introduced by ſin, and ſhould be applied to nothing elſe. But it is the miſery of our fallen nature that we "glory in our ſhame," and are aſhamed of our glory. Wicked men are not aſhamed of ſin, but they are aſhamed of that Goſpel, which would ſave them from ſin. Through the temptations of the devil, and the ignorance, pride, and carnality of the human heart, true religion has always been accounted a ſhameful thing, ſo that it has always required a holy boldneſs to make an open profeſſion of it. But let us ſee what it is that makes men aſhamed of the Goſpel, and whether there be any good reaſon for being ſo.

1. Some are aſhamed of the Goſpel, becauſe it is chiefly poor and mean people who profeſs it. This was an objection made by the Phariſees to our Saviour himſelf—*Have any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees, believed on him?* The meanneſs of Chriſt's outward appearance, and that of his followers, was a ſtumbling block to the Jews. But there is nothing ſolid in this objection. The deſign of God in the Goſpel is to humble the pride of man, and therefore "he hath choſen the fooliſh, weak, baſe, and deſpiſed things of the world, to confound the things that are wiſe, mighty, and honourable, that

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no flesh should glory in his presence." Christ rejoiced that "the poor had the Gospel preached unto them," and that "divine things were revealed unto babes."

2. Some are ashamed of the Gospel, because it is, as they pretend, foolish and irrational, such as none but weak and ignorant people can embrace. So the Greeks, who were learned and wise, accounted it at first. So many who are "wise in their own conceit," now reckon it. They pretend that there are mysteries in it which cannot be understood, such as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, Regeneration, the Resurrection, &c. To this we answer, there are mysteries in nature, which the wisest man cannot explain, and is it any wonder that there should be mysteries in religion, especially that God, who is an infinite Spirit, should be above our comprehension? It is true that there are many things in the Gospel *above* our reason, but we defy any man to prove that there is one thing *contrary* to reason. Besides, it should be remembered that man is a fallen creature; that the thoughts of his heart are evil continually; that *the natural man* (the animal or rational man) *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can be know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Hence we see, that reason, though a noble gift of God, is insufficient to guide us in matters of religion; and he who would be saved must humble himself as a little child, and pray to be taught of God. But,

3. The true and greatest cause why many are ashamed of the Gospel is, that it requires a holy life; it requires a separation from the world; the denial of self; the mortification of sin. It will not allow a man to live like a brute in the indulgence of his carnal lusts. It requires a life of faith, repentance, devotion; in a word, Christ says to every professor of his religion, *Give me thine heart.* Now, while a man remains in his natural state, he loves the world, he loves sin, and his heart is enmity against God: *he loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil.*

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But this holy tendency of the Goſpel is ſo far from being an objection to it, that we ſhould prize it on this very account; this proves it came from God, and on this account, St. Paul gloried in it. *God forbid that I ſhould glory ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world.*

APPLICATION.

And now, men and brethren, ſuffer the word of exhortation. Has God, in his infinite mercy, ſent us this glorious Goſpel? then let us be very thankful for it, and very attentive to it. Let it be the ſtudy of our lives, and the delight of our hearts. Nothing ſo juſtly demands, nothing can ſo well requite our beſt regard, as this. It is God's greateſt and beſt gift to a loſt world. And he takes particular notice how we receive it. O let us beware of neglecting it. Angels deſire to look into theſe things; and ſhall not *we* ſtudy them diligently, who are ſo much more intereſted in them? Compared with the Goſpel, all other books are waſte paper. Compared with the Goſpel tidings, all other news is trifling. This alone can teach us how we may be pardoned and ſanctified; this alone can ſecure our happineſs in time and eternity.

We have now heard that the Goſpel is the *power* of God, it is that which he works by, and renders effectual to the ſalvation—of whom? To whom is this Goſpel the powerful inſtrument of ſalvation? It is only to them that believe. Let infidels tremble; they alas, have no part nor lot in this matter. Faith begins in an *aſſent*, a cordial aſſent, to the truth of the Goſpel. It it received as a divine teſtimony. The believer ſets his ſeal to it, that it is true. Faith proceeds to *affiance* or *truſt* in Chriſt. "He firſt gives a firm aſſent to the Goſpel, then cordially accepts its bleſſings; from a conviction that the doctrine is true, he paſſes to a perſuaſion that the privileges are is own." The believer then cleaves inſeparably to Chriſt, depends inceſſantly on Chriſt. Gladly does he renounce all dependance on himſelf,

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all ideas of human merit; he flies to this refuge, there he is ſafe; he builds on this foundation, and he ſhall never be removed. This done, ſweet peace takes poſſeſſion of his conſcience; hope enlivens his breaſt; love warms his heart; zeal fires his ſoul; and he cries, Deareſt Saviour, I am thine. Henceforth I will follow thee. I will ſerve thee all my days on earth, and I deſire to be with thee for ever in heaven.

And are any aſhamed of this Goſpel; a Goſpel ſo wiſe, ſo holy; ſo honourable to God, ſo ſafe to man? Let them be aſhamed of it who never knew its nature, who never felt its power. No man can be aſhamed of it, if it be the power of God to his ſoul. No; "he that believeth hath the witneſs, or teſtimony, in himſelf;" he can give a reaſon of the hope that is in him. And being baptized unto Chriſt, he will "not be aſhamed to confeſs the faith of Chriſt crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner againſt ſin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Chriſt's faithful ſoldier and ſervant unto his life's end." And O, beware! beware young people, leſt any ſeduce you from the faith, by the pride of reaſon and ſophiſtry of wicked men. Ever be on your guard, and remember thoſe awful words of Chriſt—*Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful generation; of him ſhall alſo the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

Finally, "let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from all iniquity." As we muſt not be aſhamed of the Goſpel, neither let us be a ſhame to it. Many are too much prejudiced againſt the Bible, even to read it; but they love to read the lives of profeſſors. Let them ſee the holy Goſpel tranſcribed in our daily walk. So ſhall we adorn and recommend it to the world, and conſtrain them to ſay that Chriſtianity is all divine.

5 DE60

A SERMON,

ON

ROMANS viii. 13.

If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

THESE words set before us LIFE and DEATH; —*eternal* life, or *eternal* death: They plainly shew us what will be the eternal consequence of a life of sin, or of a life of grace; and therefore it is of the greatest importance to us clearly to understand them, in order that we may know what will be our future portion. "It is a question, said an old divine, you ought seriously to put to yourselves, Shall I be saved, or Shall I be damned? If you have any spark of conscience left when you are sick or dying, you will put it with an anxious and trembling heart: Poor soul, whither art thou going? It is better, my friends, to put this question *now*, while you have opportunity to correct your error, if hitherto you have been wrong. And nothing will sooner determine it than this text." *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, &c.* These words contain two things, which I shall express in two plain sentences.

I. If sin *live* in us, we must *die* eternally, and

II. If sin *die* in us, we shall *live* eternally.

I. If sin *live* in us, we shall *die*; that is, if it reign and rule; "if we live after the flesh, we shall die."

By the *flesh*, we are to understand human nature in its present fallen state. Man is made up of two parts, body and soul, or flesh and spirit, but man is

now called *flesh*, because the spirit is dead to God, and he lives only a fleshly or animal life. So God spake of the wicked world before the flood, Gen. vi. 3. *And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man*, that is, by the good counsels and faithful warnings of Noah and others, *for that he also is flesh*—incurably corrupt, carnal and sensual; sunk into the mire of sin and fleshly lusts. This is still the case of all men before they receive the grace of God; they are flesh. They take their name from that part which rules, which is the flesh, and not the spirit: they are wholly engaged by things which concern the body and its sensual delights. Hence it is that the *mind* itself is called *carnal* or *fleshly*, verse 5, 6, "For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This bad turn of mind is called *flesh*, because it exerts itself by means of the senses and members of the body; for carnal men *yield their members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity*, Rom. vi. 19. Habits and practices of uncleanness and iniquity are like tyrannical lords and masters, which rule over sinners, to whom they have resigned the members of their bodies, and the affections of their minds.

Now, to *live after the flesh*, is to obey the dictates and orders of our corrupt nature; to gratify its sinful desires, without regard to the will of God, yea in direct contradiction to his will. And this will appear more plainly by considering the *actions*, the *words*, and the *thoughts* of a carnal man.

Take a view, in the first place, of his *actions*. Among these the Apostle, Gal. v. 19, mentions *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, &c.* These are abominations to which corrupt nature is strongly inclined. The world is full of pollution through lust. In youth, especially, these sins are predominant; and "it is a shame even to speak of the things that

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are done in ſecret." And however lightly the ſins of uncleanneſs may be thought of in general, we are aſſured by the Scriptures, that *whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Drunkenneſs* is another work of the fleſh. Fools make a mock at this ſin alſo, but St. Paul declares, 1 Cor. vi. 10, that *drunkards ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* It is very common for a perſon to promiſe himſelf ſecurity in this ſin, and to ſay, *I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt*; but what does God ſay in this caſe? *The Lord will not ſpare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man,* Deut. xxix. 19. The *profane* man alſo lives after the fleſh. What can be a plainer proof that man is deſtitute of the fear of God, than his daring to ſet the Moſt High at defiance, and wantonly and wickedly to take his aweful name in vain? The *Sabbath breaker* lives after the fleſh. The man who, having no regard to the authority of God, no love to his ſervice, and no care for his own ſoul, dares to ſpend the ſacred hours of the Lord's day in worldly buſineſs, idleneſs, and pleaſure. The conduct of the Sabbath breaker proves in a dreadful manner, that he is fleſh, and as much a ſtranger to the life of God in the ſoul as the beaſts that periſh. *Let no man, then, deceive himſelf with vain words; for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience.*

But it is not only by theſe groſſly immoral actions that men appear to live after the fleſh; a man's *ſpeech* bewrayeth him. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh. We have already mentioned curſing and ſwearing, on account of which our land mourneth. Equally carnal is that corrupt communication with proceedeth out of the mouth; that "filthineſs, fooliſh talking, and jeſting, which are not convenient." O how is the tongue, the glory of man, debaſed by curſing, lying, ſlandering, evil ſpeaking, lewd ſongs, and wanton

ſpeeches. *The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth our members, and is ſet on fire of hell*, James iii. 6. The converſation of carnal men is wholly carnal. They can talk fluently for hours together upon worldly ſubjects, but let the things of God be introduced, the company is ſtruck dumb! natural men can find nothing to ſay to God, or to one another, on all the great and glorious ſubjects of ſalvation and eternal life.

But we muſt go a ſtep further. "As a man *thinketh* in his heart, ſo is he." A man muſt be judged of by his prevailing, choſen, and delightful thoughts. *Out of the heart*, ſaid our Lord, *proceed evil thoughts*. A good man may have bad thoughts, but a bad man, a natural man, cannot have good thoughts. A good man hates vain, wicked, lewd, or blaſphemous thoughts; but a wicked man loves, cheriſhes, and delights in them. It is ſaid of the wicked, *God is not in all his thoughts*. He riſes in the morning without any thoughts of God. He goes about his buſineſs without any thoughts of him. He ſits down to his table, and riſes from it without any thoughts of him. And he goes to reſt, like a beaſt, in the ſame manner. Thus it is ſaid in verſe 5, of this chapter—*they that are after the fleſh do mind the things of the fleſh*—they are *carnally minded*; they conſtantly and habitually conſult and reliſh, purſue and delight in only worldly, ſenſual, and ſinful things, ſuch as are agreeable to their carnal and unrenewed appetites. And this may ſerve to convince ſome perſons, how much they deceive themſelves reſpecting their true ſtate before God. They flatter themſelves that they ſhall be ſaved, becauſe they are not ſo wicked as others; but they have never noticed the prevailing bent and inclination of their minds. They are not drunkards, or ſwearers, or liars; *but they mind earthly things*; and St. John aſſures us, that *if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us*. Doubtleſs there is a neceſſary, lawful, and commendable regard to our

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proper callings, and worldly affairs, and there is a lawful enjoyment of worldly comforts; but the evil lies in this, ſo to love the world as to make it our portion, our chief good; to love the world more than God, who does not reckon himſelf to be loved ſincerely, unleſs he be loved *ſupremely*, "with all our heart and ſoul and ſtrength." The love of God and the love of the world are like the two ſcales of a balance, as the one riſes the other falls; and let every man aſk himſelf how it is with him. O how little place have the bleſſed God, the precious Redeemer, the Holy Spirit, the care of the ſoul, the duties of Religion, or the concerns of eternity, in the hearts of natural men! The thoughts of theſe things are ſeldom entertained, and then they are not welcomed. They are a burden and a taſk; and the mind, when forced to regard them, diſlikes them, and ſprings from them again into worldly matters with delight, as a fiſh into the water, which is its own proper element.

Now, Sirs, as you love your ſouls, mark the conſequence of living after the fleſh—*If ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die!* Dreadful words, *Ye ſhall die!* "To be carnally minded is death." It is a kind of death in itſelf. The carnal man is now dead to God; "dead while he liveth;" "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins." And "the wages of ſin is death." Not only the death of the body, which is the ſeparation of the ſoul from it; but the death of ſoul and body too, in their everlaſting ſeparation from God, the fountain of all happineſs. *This is the ſecond death*, as it comes after that of the body, and is inexpreſſibly more terrible; and ſhall never end in a reſurrection to eternal life. At preſent, God exerciſes much patience towards his enemies. His ſun ſhines and his rain deſcends, both on good and bad men. He gives them time and ſpace for repentance, to which his merciful goodneſs ought to lead them. But when all theſe have proved in vain, and the man has perſiſted in his carnal courſe to the end of life, then God will withdraw all his favours;

his mercy will indeed be clean gone for ever, and he will be favourable no more. And O, woe, woe, woe to the man from whom God departs, and to whom he will say, "Depart from me, ye curſed."

All this is the natural and neceſſary conſequence of living after the fleſh. What elſe could be reaſonably expected? There are but two eternal ſtates for men after this life. Every man is training up for one of theſe. The carnal man is unfit for heaven. There he cannot come; for all the joys and employments of the bleſſed are ſpiritual. Delighting in God, loving God, praiſing God, are the charming employments of the redeemed. But the carnal man well knows that he has no reliſh for theſe things; and he could not be happy in heaven, were he admitted there. What then muſt be his portion? There is no other place for him but hell: and for this he was fitting himſelf all his days. He was training up in enmity againſt God, hardening his heart, and abuſing his mercies, deſpiſing his grace, neglecting his ſalvation, trampling on his authority, and blaſpheming his name; thus was he preparing for that horrid dungeon, where he muſt be the companion of men like minded, and of devils whoſe dictates he obeyed. "Depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

O think of this, ye who live in ſin! See what an enemy you have, even the fleſh; an enemy within; an enemy without which the devil might tempt and the world invite in vain. Beware, then, of indulging the fleſh; it may ſeem to be your friend; but it is your worſt foe; and, like Judas, it kiſſes to betray. Fly then from the allurements of ſinful pleaſure and ſenſual enjoyments. I beſeech you to abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul; and in your turn declare war againſt the fleſh. This is indeed a juſt and neceſſary war; a war that ſhall be ſucceſsful and glorious; for, as it is added in our text—*If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live*; which leads us to the ſecond thing propoſed, namely,

II. If

II. If ſin *die* in us, we ſhall live eternally.

Here we muſt conſider what is meant by mortifying ſin—by what help we may do it; and—the bleſſed conſequence of doing it.

To *mortify* ſin is to *kill* it; to *put it to death*, as the magiſtrates put a felon to death, by due courſe of juſtice. He is ſuſpected, apprehended, tried, and executed. We muſt firſt ſuſpect ourſelves and our ſins. Conſideration is the firſt ſtep in religion. He who never ſuſpected he was wrong, may depend upon it he is not yet right. Sin muſt be conſidered as our worſt enemy; the tyrant that would enſlave and deſtroy our ſouls. We muſt find out our ſins, or "be ſure they will find us out." We muſt determine, by the grace of God, to deſtroy them, or they will deſtroy us. The matter muſt be brought to this iſſue, kill or be killed. You muſt kill ſin, or it will kill you.

But how is this to be done? Sin muſt be *crucified*. This is the manner of killing it which God has appointed. *They that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts*, Gal. v. 24. The deſtruction of our ſins is compared to the crucifixion of Chriſt, not only becauſe it is like it, but becauſe it proceeds from it. There is no death of ſin but by the death of Chriſt; by virtue of it, and by intereſt in it.

Crucifixion is a *violent* and *painful* death; and ſo is the death of ſin. Our ſins muſt not be left to die of themſelves. Some people, eſpecially old people, think that they have left their ſins, when the fact is, their ſins have left them, or one ſin has left them to make room for another. Sin muſt be ſeized, though in the height of its health and power; ſeized as a thief or murderer who breaks into your houſe. It may be very painful to mortify the deeds of the body. Jeſus Chriſt compares it to cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye, but he ſays, this is better than going to hell with two hands or two eyes. It may be very hard to break off from old ſins, but it *muſt* be done; and, by the grace of God, it *may* be done.

Crucifixion

Crucifixion is a *ſcandalous death*. Only the worſt of ſlaves and criminals were put to death in this manner. So the Chriſtian, who, through the Spirit, mortifies the deeds of the body, puts off the old man of ſin, and puts on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, may expect to be deſpiſed as his Saviour was. The world will bear morality, but it hates holineſs. Religion has generally borne ſome nick name. Formerly they called pious men *Puritans*, as if it were a ſcandalous thing to be purified from the pollutions of the world; and now they call religious people *Methodiſts*, as if it were ſhameful to purſue the methods which God himſelf preſcribes. But "he that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution."

Crucifixion is a *ſlow* and *lingering* death. Our Lord was ſeveral hours on the croſs; and ſome have been as many days. So ſin dies ſlowly. Mortifying the deeds of the body is a conſtant act; to be continued as long as we live. The beſt believer cannot ſay ſin is dead, but he can bleſs God that ſin is dying. It is nailed to the croſs; has received ſome mortal wounds; it is gradually weakening; and, ere long, God will ſend death to give the finiſhing ſtroke, and the believer ſhall ſhout *Victory*, ſaying, Bleſſed be God who hath delivered me from this body of ſin and death; I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord.

But, by what means, or by what help, may we effectually mortify ſin? Our text ſays, *Through the Spirit*—by the gracious aid and influence of the Holy Spirit enabling us to do it. *Without me*, ſaid Chriſt, *ye can do nothing:* and experience proves it true. How many poor ſouls have been ſenſible of the error of their ways, at times alarmed about their ſins, and have reſolved to forſake them, and lead a new life? but knowing nothing of their own weakneſs or of Chriſt's ſtrength, they have

"Reſolved, and re-reſolved, and died the ſame."

To as little purpoſe have others ſaid many prayers, faſted certain days, denied themſelves the comforts

of

of life, or ſubmitted to the painful penance of Popiſh prieſts. The power of ſin was not leſſened; the principle of ſin was not weakened, the practice of ſin was not prevented. When the ſenſe of ſin was worn off, and the fears of hell abated, they "returned like the dog to his vomit, and the ſow that was waſhed to her wallowing in the mire."

"A young gentleman, whoſe ſenſual luſts were extremely violent, procured an entire female ſcull; and every morning, before he went out, ſpent ſome minutes in ſurveying it; expecting that the ſight of ſo unpleaſing an object, would operate as an antidote to the power of that temptation to which he was ſo ſubject. But alas, his corrupt inclination ſtill prevailed, and he ſinned as frequently as ever. So he gave away the ſcull, finding it did him no ſervice. Afterwards, God was pleaſed to convert him; and vital grace did that for him, which a dead ſcull was unable to effect. His eaſy beſetting ſin had no more dominion over him from the day that the Holy Ghoſt laid effectual hold on his heart."

We muſt firſt *have* the Spirit, that we may experience his ſanctifying power. Having the Spirit, makes all the difference between a true Chriſtian and a man of the world; for *if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his. That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh.* There is nothing in the fleſh, or corrupt nature, that can crucify the fleſh, or prevent its corrupt actings. Something of a nature directly contrary to it muſt be added, and that is a new and divine principle, implanted by regeneration; for *that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit:* The regenerated perſon is a ſpiritual perſon, poſſeſſed of a principle like its Author; and this principle acts according to its ſpiritual nature, in ſpiritual duties, and particularly in this, the mortification of ſin.

The ſpirit helps us to mortify ſin by enabling us to diſcover it, and by ſhewing us its hateful and abominable nature; filling our ſouls with a ſincere diſlike to it, and a holy determination to deſtroy it.

He takes away the ſtony inſenſible heart, and gives us an heart of fleſh, an heart to mourn for ſin, an heart to oppoſe ſin, an heart to watch againſt ſin, and ſhun the firſt approaches towards it.

But eſpecially he helps us to mortify ſin by giving us faith, and leading us to Chriſt for pardon, righteouſneſs, and ſtrength. In the firſt verſe of this chapter it is ſaid—"There it no condemnation to them which are *in Chriſt Jeſus*, and then it *follows*—"who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit." Many of the Jews "followed after righteouſneſs, but they did not attain it. Wherefore? Becauſe they ſought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling ſtone." Let us beware of ſtumbling in the ſame manner. Faith in Chriſt is the chief inſtrument for killing ſin. Behold the Lamb of God, bleeding and dying, not only to take away the guilt of ſin that it may not condemn, but the power of ſin alſo that it may not prevail. "Sin ſhall not have dominion over thee, believer, for thou art not under the law, but under grace." See, flowing from the wounded ſide of thy crucified Lord, blood and water; blood to pardon, water to cleanſe. It was the deſign of the dear Redeemer "to deſtroy the works of the devil;" "to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The Lord Jeſus having thus deſigned the death of ſin in believers by his own death, is ready to apply the power of it for that purpoſe, to all who believe in him. Come then, by faith, to Jeſus; tell him of the power of thy ſins, and of thy inability to deſtroy them; plead the fulneſs that is in him for thy ſupply; beſeech him to ſubdue thine iniquities, and leave the matter in his hands. His grace is ſufficient for thee; his ſtrength ſhall be perfected in thy weakneſs. Expect his help. His power, his grace, his faithfulneſs, are all engaged for thine aſſiſtance, and thou ſhalt not apply or wait in vain.

This promiſed help of the Spirit does not exclude the

the uſe of means on our part. The Spirit ſo works *in* us, as alſo to work *by* us. The duty is ours; the grace is his. We muſt watch and pray leſt we enter into temptation. We muſt remember his eye is always upon us. We muſt call to mind the obligations we are under, from duty, from gratitude, from baptiſmal and ſacramental engagements; the relation we bear to Chriſt, to the church, and the world. We muſt uſe with moderation the comforts of life, and inſtead of pampering the body, bring it under and keep it in ſubjection.

Thus doing, *we ſhall live*. There is no condemnation to perſons of this character. Though they find, to their daily ſorrow, that "the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit," they have reaſon to rejoice that "the Spirit luſteth againſt the fleſh." This is an evidence that they have "paſſed from death unto life." They live *indeed*, for Chriſt liveth in them. They live to purpoſe, for they live to God. And in this, their gradual ſanctification, conſiſts their meetneſs for heaven, where ſin ſhall all be done away. O Chriſtian, go on. Be not weary in well-doing; fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on *eternal life*.

But, O ſinner, what will be the end of thy preſent purſuits? *The end of theſe things is death*. Lay to heart the ſolemn truths you heard in the beginning of this diſcourſe. Remember that life and death have been ſet before you; life, if ſin be ſlain; death, if ſin prevail. Put home then to thy conſcience the important queſtion. Am I living after the fleſh, or after the Spirit? And by this you may determine your preſent ſtate, and future proſpects. If thou liveſt after the fleſh, thou ſhalt die; that is, thou ſhalt be damned. And are you in love with death and deſtruction? Is it nothing to you that the terrors of the Almighty are ſounded in your ears? Do you love your ſins ſo well as to be damned for them? O, be wiſer!" "Set eternal pains againſt momentary pleaſures. The *pleaſures* of ſin are but for a ſeaſon, but the *pains* of ſin are for evermore." And O, do

not

not flatter yourselves that you may enjoy the pleasures of sin in this world, and yet enjoy the pleasures of heaven in another. The God who says, in our text, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*, is a God of truth; he cannot lie. "Upon the wicked he will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." Come, then, forsake the foolish and live. Wrong not your own souls. Forsake not your own mercies. Let the time past suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, and to have served divers lusts and pleasures. Open your eyes and behold your danger. Flee from the wrath to come. Confess your sins to God. Beseech him to pardon them; and pray for the Holy Spirit to work faith in your heart, and enable you *to mortify the deeds of the body, that you may live.*

5 DE60

A SERMON,

ON

ISA. i. 18.

Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the LORD: *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.*

THE pardon of ſin has been juſtly called, *The life-blood of religion.* It is this which runs through all the parts of Scripture, like the blood in our veins, and is the foremoſt object in the glorious Goſpel. No man has a grain of religion till he ſees the need, and feels the want, of the pardon of his ſins. No man is happy in religion till he has reaſon to conclude that his ſins are pardoned. Gratitude for this bleſſing is the grand incentive to holy obedience, and triumph on account of it forms the bliſs of glorified ſaints. How worthy, then, is this ſubject of our moſt ſerious regard! We all need pardon; and *pardon* or *puniſhment* muſt be our portion.

Among the precious promiſes of God's word, this, in our text, is one of the chief. And it appears the more gracious, as it follows a liſt of moſt heinous and abominable ſins charged upon the Jews. This will appear more clearly by conſidering the three parts of our text.

1. A CHARGE. 2. AN INVITATION, and 3. A PROMISE.

1. The firſt thing in the text is a CHARGE implied, and more particularly expreſſed in the former verſes of this chapter. The charge is *Sin—*

ſin, the moſt aggravated, the moſt horrid, the moſt enormous. Sins, called *ſcarlet* and *crimſon*. The *greatneſs* of ſin is intended by theſe words. *Scarlet* and *crimſon* are colours far remote from *white*, which is the emblem of innocence or righteouſneſs. The ſaints in glory are repreſented as "clothed in white robes," and "in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints. But here, ſinners are repreſented as in garments ſtained with blood. The bloody, murderous, deſtructive nature of ſin may be intended. Sin has ſlain its millions. If all the bodies of the dead were heaped up, they would form the greateſt mountain in the world; and we might ſay—Sin ſlew all theſe; "for, by one man, ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; ſo that death hath paſſed over all men, for that all have ſinned." Some underſtand by the word *ſcarlet—double-dyed*—as deeply tinctured by ſin as poſſible; as when any garment has been twice dyed, firſt in the wool, and again in the thread or piece. So great ſinners are twice dyed; firſt in their corrupt nature, for all men are born in ſin; and then dyed again in the long confirmed habits of actual tranſgreſſions.

But let us look over the particulars of this charge. Sinners are firſt charged with *Ingratitude*, ver. 2. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath ſpoken: I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me." Call a man ungrateful, and you call him all that is bad: but the ingratitude of children is the worſt ingratitude. Children are under the greateſt obligations to their tender parents, for food and raiment, protection and education; but if, inſtead of dutiful obedience and affectionate care, they return evil for good, rebellion inſtead of ſubjection; it is like fixing a dagger in a parent's heart. Such a trial David felt in the wicked conduct of his beloved Abſalom. In this manner God ſpeaks of man's ſin. God is good: and "the goodneſs of God leadeth us to repentance;" but impenitent ſinners "deſpiſe the

the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering; and thus treaſure up wrath againſt the day of wrath."

Again. Sinners are charged with *Inſenſibility*, ver. 3, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs his maſter's crib: but Iſrael doth not know, my people do not conſider." It is a ſad thing indeed, that man, who was made in the image of God, ſhould be made by ſin like the beaſts that periſh; yea, worſe than they are. The ox is a ſtupid creature, yet he knows his owner, and ſubmits his neck to the yoke; the aſs is ſtill more ſtupid, yet he knows when he is well off, and abides by his maſter's crib; but ſinners are more baſe, more ignorant, more ſtupid: "They have the worſt qualities of brutes, without the beſt." They do not know God; they do not conſider their duty to God, nor their obligations to God; even Iſrael, that might and ought to know better.

They are further charged with *forſaking God*. All ſinners do ſo. They turn their backs upon him. They ſay, in effect, "Depart from us, for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways:" "What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him; and what profit ſhall we have if we pray unto him?" Beſide this, they *corrupted others*. They were not content to eat the devil's morſel alone? they muſt entice others to poiſon them with it. And, indeed, this is awefully common among us. When young perſons fall into the ſin of uncleanneſs, how active are they to ſeduce others; when men fall into the ſin of drunkenneſs, how buſy are they to engage others in the ſame vice.

Theſe ſins were *univerſal*, ver. 4, "Ah, ſinful *nation*, a people laden with iniquity! All orders of people were guilty; the whole head was ſick, the whole heart was faint." God knows it is thus in England. We are a wicked people, and the Lord is *provoked* with us. All the miſeries of human life, all the terrors and agonies of death, all the torments of the damned, are proofs of God's anger againſt

sin. Sin is a heavy load, though fools make light of it. And they who make light of it now, are likely to feel its dreadful weight in another world. Sooner or later it will be found a burden too heavy to bear. Happy they, who now feeling its load, obey the kind invitation of Chriſt, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt."

The condition of Iſrael, and of every ſinner, is compared, ver. 6, to that of a human body wholly diſordered and become intolerably loathſome. "From the ſole of the foot even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it; but wounds, and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores; they have not been cloſed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." See, ſinner, thy wretched picture! Sin is the diſeaſe of thy ſoul, and the worſt ſymptom is, thou knoweſt it not. We pity the ravings of a man in a fever, who fancies himſelf in health; ſuch is the dangerous condition of ſinners who boaſt of their "good hearts," or call their abominations "human frailties," or "youthful follies." In the eye of a pure and holy God, the ſinner is far more loathſome than a carcaſe covered with bleeding wounds, running ſores, or filthy ulcers.

It is abſolutely neceſſary that each of us ſhould perſonally know that this is his own caſe. Miniſters are, at the peril of their own ſouls, obliged to declare this; they muſt ſhew the people their ſins, and warn them from God, or the ſinners' blood will be required at their hands. But if ſinners are faithfully warned, miniſters are free from their blood; their blood is on their own heads. But O! how unwilling are men to ſee and own their true condition! How do they ſhut their eyes againſt the light that would make manifeſt their works of darkneſs! How dearly do they love the darkneſs that conceals their ſins! How angry are they to be told of their diſeaſe! How do they hate the Goſpel that reveals a remedy, and ſhun the kind phyſician who would cure them! And yet, mark

their

their inconsiſtency! "Do we not hear them deny to men that they are *condemned*; and yet cry to God to *have mercy upon them?* But if they are not condemned, what need have they of *mercy?* And if they are, why do they deny their loſt eſtate?" We hear them alſo praiſing God for his "ineſtimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt;" but how abſurd is this if they belive not, if they feel not the wretched bondage of their sins?

But now, obſerve, with wonder and joy, the aſtoniſhing grace of God. What language might ſinners juſtly expect, who had been convicted of ingratitude, rebellion, inſenſibility, and every provoking ſin? Might they not well expect that God ſhould ſay, "Depart from me ye curſed?" But, O ſurprising mercy, his language is, "Come now and let us reaſon together;" and this is the

SECOND thing in the text, THE INVITATION: "And is this the manner of man, O Lord?" Far from it. Truly, "his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways." God does not deal with men, as men deal with each other. If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? No: but God, from whom no enemy can eſcape, and who can at any time take the deſerved vengeance, invites poor ſinners to come and reaſon with him. God had charged Iſrael with their many ſins. He had viſited them with national judgements. He had refuſed to accept their hypocritical devotions. He had threatened to give them up and utterly forſake them; and laſtly, he had called them to repentance and reformation; ver. 16, 17. "Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well; ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow." And then he adds, "Come now, and let us *reaſon* together." God is willing to ſhew the equity of his conduct. Let theſe bold offenders come and plead their own cauſe, and ſhew

what they have to ſay for themſelves; and let them find fault, if they can, with the divine proceedings. If they will perſiſt in ſin, their damnation is just. If they confeſs and forſake it, they ſhall find mercy: their ſcarlet sins ſhall be as white as ſnow.

We ſhall take occaſion, from hence, briefly to ſhew that true religion, *vital* religion, is the moſt reaſonable thing in the world.

Is not ſelf-preſervation highly reaſonable? We account it the firſt law of nature, and ſhould blame the man who neglects it. Is a houſe on fire? let the inhabitant eſcape for his life. Is the prodigal ready to ſtarve? let him haſten to his father's houſe. Is the man drowning? let him ſeize on the rope thrown out for his help. Is the ſhip ſinking? let the ſailors throw overboard their valuable ſtores, for "all that a man hath will he give for his life." But is the life of the body all? What muſt become of the ſoul? Shall we take all theſe pains to preſerve a life that muſt inevitably end, and ſhall we take no pains to ſave a ſoul that is immortal, and which muſt live for ever in heaven or hell: Hear how Chriſt reaſons, Matt. x. 28, "Fear not them which kill the *body*, but are not able to kill the *ſoul*; but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell:" for consider:—God aſks the queſtion—"Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be ſtrong, in the days that I ſhall deal with thee?"

Is it not reaſonable for a man to do well for himſelf? yes; "men will praiſe thee when thou doeſt well for thyſelf?" We commend the honeſt, ingenious, induſtrious tradeſman; but, O! "the children of this world are wiſer in their generation than the children of light." Is it reaſonable for a man to mind his own buſineſs? Well; "one thing is needful;" the care of thy ſoul is the buſineſs of life. Is it reaſonable to improve opportunities for buſineſs, as fairs and markets? Redeem then the time, and catch the golden opportunities of gain to thy

thy ſoul. Is it reaſonable to make a good bargain? The Chriſtian makes the beſt in the world. He is the wiſe merchant, who, ſeeking goodly pearls, findeth, at length, Jeſus Chriſt, the pearl of great price, and goeth and ſelleth all that he hath to buy it. Is it reaſonable to lie up for a rainy day? How much more to provide for a dying day, that we may be ready for the great change, and find it gain to die. Is it reaſonable to cultivate friendſhip with the wiſe, the good, and the great? O how wiſe to make Chriſt our friend, to have an agent in heaven, an advocate with the Father; for, indeed, "Jeſus Chriſt is the beſt friend or the worſt enemy we can have."

Is it not reaſonable to believe the God of truth? The word of God has every confirmation we could wiſh. It is confirmed by the exact fulfilment of numerous predictions, by the performance of unqueſtionable miracles; by its perfect agreement with matters of fact, both in obſervation and experience; and by the daily wonders of grace performed by its means. Whatever ſome men pretend to the contrary, they and they only, act a rational part who take God at his word; while others are ſo unreaſonable as to "make God a liar," and give credit to the grand deceiver.

Finally, *Is not love to God and man perfectly reaſonable?* This is the whole of our religion. Is it reaſonable or not, think you, to love the beſt of beings better than all other beings? And if we love him, we ſhall believe him, and obey him. Should not a creature love is Maker? Should not a dependent love his benefactor? Should not a redeemed ſinner love his Saviour? And what is the whole of morality, as it reſpects man, but loving our neighbour as ourſelves; and where is the man who wiſhes not thus to be treated by others?

But we have a further and a very ſtrong inducement to obey the divine invitation, and come to reaſon with him, for he has made us a moſt gracious PROMISE in the text, which is the

THIRD

THIRD particular of our diſcourſe. This gracious promiſe is, *Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.*

The pardon of ſin is, as we obſerved at the beginning, the firſt and chief thing in religion. It was the great buſineſs of Chriſt upon earth to procure it; he took our fleſh that he might take our ſin, and died, "the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God." It is the principal deſign of the Goſpel, which is preached to us, "that we may obtain forgiveneſs of ſins." It is the firſt bleſſing ſought by renewed ſouls; "for this ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found." It conſtitutes one of the titles of the bleſſed God: "Who is like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity." And it compoſes a part of the ſongs of heaven; for the redeemed continually adore "the Lamb that was ſlain, and who waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood."

The pardon of ſin originates in the free mercy and ſovereign grace of God, without reſpect to any thing good in the creature. That *men* are ſaved rather than *angels*; and that *one* man is pardoned rather than *another*, is a matter of mercy alone; for "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy; for he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. It was mere mercy that a Saviour was provided, for "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting life." God delighteth in mercy. It is his moſt glorious name; for, when Moſes deſired to ſee his *glory*, God cauſed his *goodneſs* to paſs before him, and proclaimed his name; which name was this: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin," Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19.

and

and xxxiv. 5, 6. We are not to ſuppoſe that ſome men obtain mercy becauſe they have not ſinned ſo much as others; as great ſins do not prevent pardon, ſo little ſinners cannot lay a claim to it. Nor are we to think that there are ſome good things in ſome ſinners, to balance their bad ones, and ſo entitle them to mercy. Nor that the tears, or prayers, or reformation of any man can merit favour at the hands of God. No. All theſe, and every thing elſe that looks like merit, muſt be renounced altogether. Every mouth muſt be ſtopped. All the world muſt plead guilty; and all the ſaved muſt own, that God, "for his own name's ſake" alone, pardons their iniquity.

But we are not to expect the pardon of ſin from an abſolute God. The pardon of ſin is an act of juſtice as well as of mercy. Mercy on God's part, but juſtice on the account of Chriſt. In the pardon of ſin, juſtice muſt be conſidered as well as mercy. If God had pardoned ſin without a ſatisfaction, what provision would have been made for the honour of his holineſs, juſtice, or truth? God would have ſeemed to wink at ſin; he would have ſeemed to have no concern for the moral government of the world; and his truth, which was engaged to ſee the threatening againſt ſin fulfilled, would have been forfeited: but in the redemption of Jeſus Chriſt, "mercy and truth have met together, righteouſneſs and peace have embraced each other;" in a word, "God is juſt and the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus;" he is "a juſt God and a Saviour." In this bleſſed way, juſtice itſelf becomes the believer's friend: for Chriſt having paid the debt, it cannot be demanded a ſecond time of the believer; and, therefore God is not only merciful in pardoning ſin, but "he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins; and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs." 1 John i. 9.

Another principal thing in the doctrine of forgiveneſs is, that it is *by faith alone* we are made partakers

partakers of pardoning mercy. Jeſus Chriſt himſelf ſays, Acts xxvi. 18.—That they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins *through faith* that is in me;" and St. Paul ſays, "By grace are ye ſaved, *through faith*." By faith, we mean "a belief of the truth," eſpecially of the teſtimony of God concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt; "that he hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son." The man who is taught of God, made ſenſible of his ſin, and deſirous of mercy, hears the Goſpel, which is good news of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; he hears that "there is forgiveneſs with God, that he may be feared;" that Chriſt is willing and able to ſave ſinners, and that "his blood cleanſeth from all ſin." He aſſents to this truth, he relies upon it, and acts accordingly; and in proportion to the credit which he gives to the Goſpel, and the dependence he places on the faithfulneſs of God, ſuch is his joy and peace in believing.

One thing more muſt be noticed: The perfection of pardon, which is expreſſed by making ſcarlet as ſnow and crimſon like wool. We are to underſtand this of the *ſinner*, not of his *ſins*. Pardon does not alter the nature or leſſen the evil of ſin; but the ſinner, however deeply dyed in ſin, double dyed, and drenched in the moſt enormous, aggravated, and bloody ſins, ſhall, upon believing, be as throughly diſcharged from the guilt of them as if he had never ſinned at all. This is an act of Almighty power. To diſcharge the colours of ſcarlet and crimſon may be impoſſible to human art, but to pardon the vileſt ſinners is perfectly eaſy to God. Elſewhere the ſame idea is expreſſed by caſting our ſins behind his back—loſing them in the depths of the ſea—blotting them out of a book—forgetting them, and removing them from us as far as the eaſt is from the weſt. Such is the perfection of pardoning mercy!

APPLICATION.

APPLICATION.

Come, Sirs, what think you of ſin? Perhaps you forget it; but God does not forget it. If it be not pardoned, it will be brought into judgement. Think not yourſelves ſafe, becauſe you fancy your ſins are little, or becauſe they give you no diſturbance, or becauſe you proſper in the world, or becauſe you have hopes of mercy. "The wages of ſin is death." The law curſes you for one offence; and if you are not redeemed, you muſt be ruined; if not pardoned, you muſt be puniſhed. If you believe not in Chriſt you are condemned already. Notwithſtanding the mercy of God and the merits of Chriſt, if you continue in a ſtate of ignorance, carnality, and unbelief, they will not at all avail you. Food cannot nouriſh if not received; nor a medicine heal if not applied. You will be none the better for Chriſt if you do not come to him; but you will be much the worſe; for how ſhall you eſcape if you neglect ſo great ſalvation? Think of theſe things, O ye children of men, before it be too late. How can you enjoy a meal, or ſleep in your beds, while your ſins remain unpardoned. O delay no longer. No longer abuſe the patience and goodneſs of God. Inſtantly fly to the refuge, O ye priſoners of hope. As yet the door is open. God will pardon the greateſt ſinner that comes to him by Jeſus Chriſt. Take with you the words of the text, and ſay, "Lord, I come at thy call; my ſins are indeed as ſcarlet: for thy name's ſake, make them white as ſnow: my crimes are red like crimſon, O waſh me in the fountain of the Saviour's blood, and they ſhall be as wool."

Believer! All hail! "Bleſſed art thou whoſe tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered. Bleſſed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity." Happy art thou. God gave thee to ſee thy ſins, to feel thy ſins, to lament thy ſins. God open thine eyes to underſtand his Goſpel. God enable thee to come with all thy ſins to Chriſt;

and

and believing in him, thou haſt paſſed from death unto life, and ſhall never come into condemnation. Admire the love of God. Admire the blood of Chriſt. Admire the grace of the Holy Spirit:

"And let your glad obedience prove,
How much you owe, how much you love."

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